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SIMON JENKINS
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SATURDAY
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THE TIMES

No. 64,859

SATURDAY JANUARY 22 1994

Ministry linked to Westminster 'homes for votes' scheme



Magill: investigated Tories
policy on selling houses

THE Government has paid more than half the cost of grants given by Westminster City Council to allow tenants to buy homes. The money, which has been used to buy property all over Britain as well as in Westminster, has been handed over in the four years since John Magill, the district auditor, was asked to investigate the council's alleged "homes for votes" policy.

Millions in payoff to tenants who went on to buy property abroad

by the council since 1990, have enabled 306 tenants to buy their homes. In some cases the grant was enough to buy the tenants' new home outright. In others the grant was awarded even though the tenant had savings in excess of the purchase price. The money was paid from a fund set up by the Environment Department as part

of an initiative meant to help the homeless in London. In 1990-91 the fund totalled £19.1 million, of which Westminster alone received £1.45 million. The following year Westminster received £2.49 million from the fund, which had been increased to £54.2 million. In the same two years Camden Council, which is adjacent to Westminster

and which claims a higher homeless rate, received £1 million and £300,000 respectively. An Environment Ministry spokesman said last night that the government money was allotted on the basis of need and evidence of how the scheme could assist the council in meeting that need. In its first letter applying for government help under the

scheme in 1989, Westminster told the ministry that it had not meant to test or interviewed applicants for grant money in any depth. The maximum grant was originally fixed at £15,000 but has now been raised to £20,000. The amount each applicant can afford to pay is calculated as being three times the family income plus its savings. The grant is awarded to make up the shortfall between this amount and the cost of the property. The council claims that thanks to the combination of a generous grant and a willingness to move to cheaper areas, the money "has enabled people to buy who could not otherwise have done so". The scheme has been successful in moving people out of Westminster. Only 36 per cent of the purchasers stayed in the Greater London area and only 1 per cent remained in Westminster. One pensioner bought a property for £17,540 in Barbados. A family moved to a house in Australia which cost £56,363.

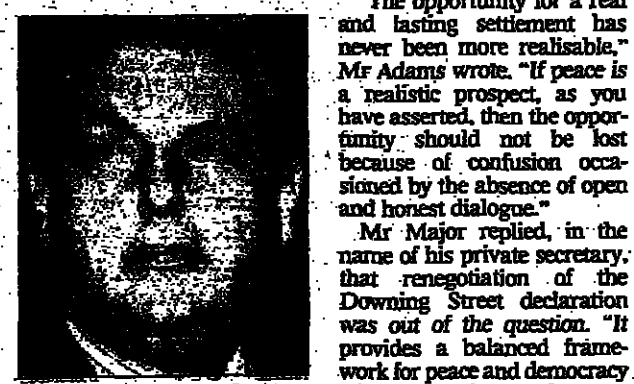
Gavin Millar, Labour's housing spokesman on Westminster Council, said last night: "The fact the Government has subsidised the grants at Westminster to this extent proves that it has colluded in the homes for votes scheme."

Major urges Sinn Fein to stop stalling

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR

Gerry Adams has addressed John Major as "a friend", but the Prime Minister's patience with the Sinn Fein leader is rapidly running out

speech and said Sir Patrick had come "perilously close to being a persuader" for a united Ireland. He said: "The onus is now on Sinn Fein to respond to the declaration." While offering the possibility of clarification after Sinn Fein joined exploratory talks, Sir Patrick made plain this would not apply to the declaration. He told the Commons: "I want there to be no doubt



Mayhew: hinted at
elected assembly

about this. We shall not add to, or take away from, gloss or interpret that text. In short, we will not clarify it, because it speaks for itself." He continued: "There can be no question of allowing the momentum to drop. There is a momentum for agreement, a hunger for the dignity and responsibility of deciding and governing local affairs. The talks process offers the way forward. Sinn Fein can join in, or stay out, but they can't stop



Jane Brown, the head living with a woman who chaired the board of governors

Romeo row head investigated over governor friend

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

THE head teacher who banned her pupils from seeing Romeo and Juliet because she thought it "blatantly heterosexual" was questioned by her employers yesterday about reports that she was living with the woman who formerly headed the school's governors who helped appoint her.

Hackney Council's enquiry into Jane Brown, 36, head of Kingsmead Primary School, was broadened after it emerged that she had set up home with Nicki Thorogood, a mother of three. Ms Thorogood chaired the governing body until last June, and was on the interviewing panel which appointed Ms Brown as head teacher. Her previous application for the job failed.

The women recently moved into an end-of-terrace house in Clapton, east London with Ms Thorogood's children. Gus John, director of education, called an urgent meeting of the governors, staff and education officials after lessons yesterday. Later he said: "I have had to expand the scope of my enquiry substantially following fresh allegations in the media that there may have been a conflict of interest in the appointment of Jane Brown. I will be continuing my investigation early next week."

Mr John added: "If at the end of the investigation I believe that a prima facie case exists (of a conflict of interest) I will recommend to the chairman of the governors that he suspends her."

Mr John is considering questioning Ms Thorogood about the relationship. He will also question the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, which offered the subsidised ballet tickets, and the Royal Opera House which staged the ballet.

On Thursday evening, the council learnt from reporters that Ms Brown and Ms Thorogood were living together and had introduced themselves to neighbours as sisters. On May 17, 1990, Ms Thorogood was co-opted to the governing body, on which Ms Brown already served as deputy head. In October 1991, Ms Brown applied for the head's post and was interviewed by a panel which did not include Ms Thorogood. She failed to get the post. One week later, Ms Thorogood became temporary chairman of governors. Within a month, she sat on a panel of four governors and two councillors which appointed Ms Brown as head.

MacKenzie leaves Sun for Sky

By ALEXANDRA FREAN
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

KELVIN MacKenzie, one of the most colourful and influential figures in British newspapers and seen by many as the embodiment of working-class Tory values, is to leave The Sun after 13 years in the editor's chair. In a move that signals the passing of a newspaper era but may herald a new chapter in broadcasting, Mr MacKenzie is to become managing director of BSkyB, the satellite television channel controlled by Rupert Murdoch.

Mr MacKenzie's departure was greeted with a mixture of disbelief, relief and cynicism by journalists yesterday. The paper's headlines, such as "Gutshot" (sinking of the Belgrano, May 1982), "Up Yours Delors" (criticism of the president of the European Commission, November 1990), "Now We've All Been Screwed by the Cabinet" (ERM disaster, September 1992) have earned him an indelible place in newspaper folklore.

Gus Fischer, chief executive of News International, said that Mr MacKenzie's appointment to BSkyB represented a promotion and a Continued on page 2, col 8

Chancellor seizes on growth rate to lift taxation gloom

By JANET BUSH AND JONATHAN PRYNN

THE Chancellor welcomed evidence yesterday that the economy had maintained its momentum in the final months of last year and professed himself "extremely confident" that growth will accelerate this year despite the impact of £8 billion of tax increases which will hit consumer pockets from April. The economy grew by 0.7 per cent in the fourth quarter of 1993, slightly faster than the pace of growth recorded in previous quarters, according to preliminary figures from the Central Statistical Office. Shares soared to new heights with the FTSE 100 index closing at 3,484.2, a new record, after touching 3,496.1 during the day.

The growth figures went some way towards banishing fears that the recovery had begun to lose momentum and clearly boosted the Chancellor's spirits. He described the recovery as good, reasonable and steady and "the envy of every major country in Western Europe".

But Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, challenged Tory MPs opposed to VAT on domestic fuel to back a Labour move to abolish the tax when it is debated in the Commons on Tuesday. Mr Brown said yesterday that the levy could be killed off if all 12

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UNITED AIRLINES

Russians vote to lift sanctions on Serbia

By OUR FOREIGN STAFF

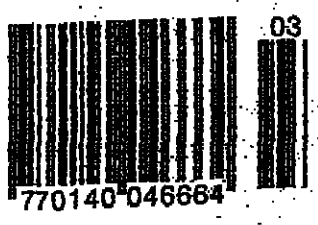
THE new Russian parliament yesterday voted by an overwhelming majority to lift sanctions against Serbia and oppose Nato air strikes on the Bosnian Serbs.

The vote in the Duma, the lower house, was the result of co-operation between the opposition Communists and the neo-Fascist Liberal Democratic Party of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. Deputies voted by 280 votes to two, with eight abstentions, for the use of exclusively political methods to solve the Bosnian conflict. An earlier motion put forward by the Communists and the Liberal Democrats had called for a withdrawal of "all foreign military contingents" from the former Yugoslavia, but this was defeated by 131 votes to 114. The Russian government has always opposed United Nations or Nato use of force against the Serbs, traditional allies of Russia. But the composition of the new parliament

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Review The Times coverage:
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UN ultimatum, page 11

Sun king, page 2

Forecast topped, page 19

Tory MP predicts 'decades of violence' in Ulster

By JONATHAN PRYNN
POLITICAL REPORTER

A TORY backbencher yesterday launched a fierce attack on the Downing Street declaration on Ulster and gave warning of a legacy of "decades of bloodshed" in the province and even the "downfall" of the United Kingdom.

Speaking in a Commons debate on Northern Ireland, Ann Winterton said the declaration encouraged terrorists to believe that the "wages of their evil" could be a united Ireland.

In the most outspoken criticism of the declaration from a Conservative, Mrs Winterton, MP for Congleton, condemned the declaration as a "fundamental political error".

She said it was inevitable that Loyalist terrorists would increase their violence and that the signatories of the joint declaration had condemned Northern Ireland to further decades of bloodshed.

Her words contrasted sharply with the cautiously welcoming tone of backbench responses to the declaration after a statement by John Major in the Commons on December 15. Mrs Winterton told the Commons there had been "too many noble words" from the Government front bench that were "all too often used to mask ignoble deeds".

Accusing ministers of "washed words", she said the declaration was a Trojan horse that heralded the "death knell of the Union and might prove the downfall of our nation".

Sir Patrick Mayhew rejected clarification of the declaration as demanded by Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin president. He reiterated that while a majority in Northern Ireland wished to remain part of the United Kingdom, "all its people can continue to count on the wholehearted commitment of the British Government".

Tabloid editor who tickled the nation's tastes and fears with his own cheeky wit

Sun King abdicates Wapping throne

By JOE JOSEPH

TO MILLIONS of Sun readers, Kelvin MacKenzie is one of journalism's geniuses, with a flair for pin-pointing the nation's prejudices, tastes and fears and then tickling them with cheeky wit.

To others he is the vulgarian who has dragged the tabloid press further into the gutter, a man who barges into the Last Chance Saloon and shoots from the hip.

The brilliance of this reclusive workaholic may be in editing a paper — which he calls "The Current Bun" — that can get those who tut-tut to laugh at *The Sun's* outrageously sure touch.

The question of whether MacKenzie is hero or hoodlum would have less import were he and his newspaper less influential. After John Major's general election victory, MacKenzie's paper boasted "It's The Sun! Won't it?"

Even critics of *The Sun* and the Tories might have sniggered at the paper's 1992 election day front-page of Neil Kinnock's head in a light-bulb with the message: "If Kinnock wins today, will the last person to leave Britain please turn out the lights?"

Other *Sun* headlines have slipped off the tightrope of taste. The most infamous of MacKenzie's 13-year reign was its "Goths" response to the sinking of the *Belgrano* during the Falklands conflict. On November 1 1990 it chastised the president of the European Commission: "Up Yours Delors."

"Freddie Starr Ate My Hamster" entered Fleet Street mythology. *The Sun* paraphrased the Queen's reflection on her *Annus Horribilis* as "One's Bum Year".

The newspaper's mistakes have been spectacular. An interview with the widow of a Falklands hero was concocted. *The Sun* sank into the costli-

est-ever libel fiasco in British journalism: Elton John won £1 million in an out-of-court settlement after the tabloid printed a string of fantasies about the rock star.

Inside *The Sun's* offices at Wapping, east London, MacKenzie is as respected for his instinct as he is feared for his humiliating sarcasm and his variety of curses. The more printable pundowns of his staff include "You couldn't edit a bus ticket". Readers don't escape after listening to one telephone caller's complaints, MacKenzie snapped: "I've heard enough. From today you're banned from reading *The Sun*."

But those who take MacKenzie's manner as evidence that a barbarian has stormed the gates can be surprised when he emerges from his seclusion. Called before a hearing last year of the Commons committee on national heritage investigating press intrusion, MacKenzie rang rings around his inquisitors with feisty eloquence.

"If you don't want to appear in the papers," he argues, "then don't drop your trousers." And MacKenzie — 47 and separated, with three children — had the grace, when caught by reporters of a rival paper with a girl friend in Barbados, to pour them a congratulatory drink.

Despite popular belief, one former staffer says the atmosphere in *The Sun* office is "puritanical and abstemious". But whatever the pressures of the place, the journalist says, "it is refreshingly meritocratic. There is no Oxbridge factor. Young journalists, regardless of background, get their chance to sink or swim."

MacKenzie has made *The Sun* a tabloid academy: the editors of six other tabloids honed their skills at his side.

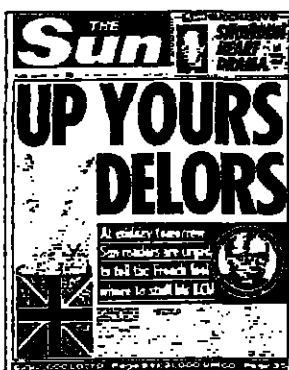
Editor goes, page 1



MacKenzie: his exuberant style entered Fleet Street mythology in the 13 years that he was editor of *The Sun*



Two of *The Sun's* famous headlines



Dedicated deputy takes on 'the greatest job in papers'

By BILL FROST

STUART Higgins, the new editor of *The Sun*, is described by insiders as an accomplished operator who knows what he wants and has little time for those who fail to deliver. Although less abrasive than his predecessor, Mr Higgins is said to be every inch as dedicated and ruthless as Kelvin MacKenzie.

Mr Higgins, 37, who is married with two children, joined *The Sun* in 1979. He has held a number of positions during his stint on the paper, including New York reporter, royal reporter, deputy news editor, features editor and executive news editor before becoming Mr MacKenzie's deputy in 1991.

He has been acting editor of the *News of the World* since December, when editor Pat Chapman went on sick leave.

Mr Higgins provoked questions in Parliament about the royal family's security when in 1982, as a reporter, he gained access to the grounds of Highgrove, home of the Prince and Princess of Wales.

The Sun claimed that Mr Higgins and a photographer had been testing security and had got within "a sniper's range of Prince Charles's bedroom window without being challenged".

The following year *The Sun* was criticised after Mr Higgins ran a campaign against the release of Moors murderer Myra Hindley and published details of her plea to the parole board.

Hindley obtained temporary injunctions against publication of further extracts from her submission, which the Court of Appeal refused to set aside.

Lord Griffiths, a past vice-chairman of the parole board, said that he could think of nothing more damaging to the parole system than for prisoners to fear that their confidential submissions to the board would be leaked to the press.



Higgins: every inch as ruthless as MacKenzie

Recently Mr Higgins has become a familiar figure as the media face of *The Sun*, fielding questions from television, radio and other papers about *The Sun's* activities.

Mr MacKenzie disliked appearing on television and preferred it if Mr Higgins was the spokesman, particularly during the paper's exposé of the tape recordings of the Princess of Wales talking to a man over the telephone.

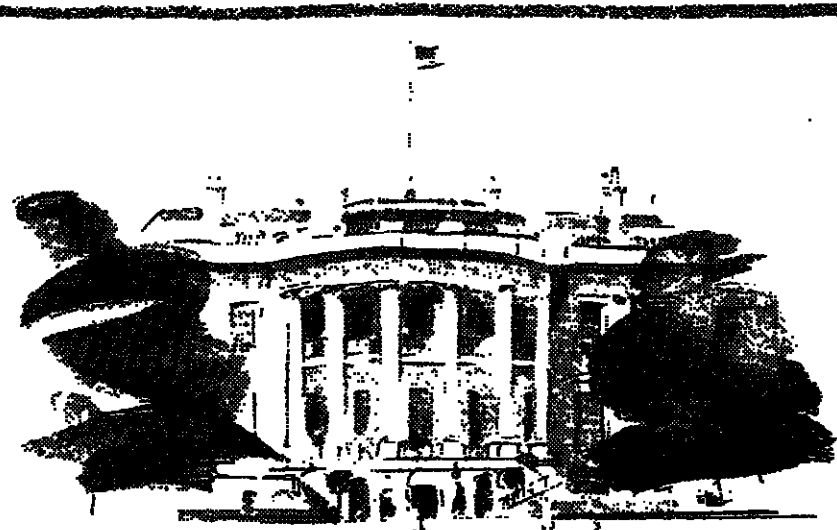
Mr Higgins is known for his implacable calm and facility for shrugging off the affronts and hard knocks that were a regular feature of life on *The Sun*.

Roy Greenslade, former editor of the *Daily Mirror*, said that *The Sun* is unlikely significantly to soften its critical line on the Conservative Government, and on Mr Major in particular.

"The Tories should not take heart by the new appointment," he said.

Gus Fischer, chief executive of News International, said yesterday: "We are fortunate to have in Stuart such an outstanding successor to Kelvin."

"I am sure that his energy and talent will keep *The Sun* as Britain's number one newspaper."



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UNITED AIRLINES

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Man arrested over boy's forest murder

A man was arrested yesterday in connection with the murder of Kieran Hegarty, 11, whose body was dumped in a forest in Strabane, Co Tyrone, on Tuesday night. Det Chief Supt Eric Anderson said that Kieran had died of multiple head injuries.

Kieran, who will be buried today, disappeared from his home in Strabane on Tuesday night after delivering a message in the town for his mother. His body was discovered by police on Wednesday night. But when detectives left the body to call for help at a nearby house, Kieran's remains were moved a few hundred yards across the forest. Police found the body for a second time on Thursday morning.

Queen Mother better

Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother is responding well to treatment with antibiotics for a chest infection, but is likely to miss church for the second Sunday in a row, Buckingham Palace said. The infection is not thought to be a matter for serious concern, but the Queen Mother, 93, has been advised to remain indoors.

Tories suspend Scots

Four leaders of the Scottish Young Conservatives were suspended yesterday over alleged far-right activities. Scott Strachan, chairman of West Scotland YCs, John France, chairman of Glasgow Provan YCs, and Cameron Steel may be expelled from the party. James Reid, the chairman, has already torn up his membership card in protest.

Lawyer gets damages

Channel 4 Television and Clark Production apologised to Alastair Brett, company solicitor to Times Newspapers, in the High Court yesterday and agreed to pay him substantial damages over references in *Hard News* in 1991 to his defence of a libel action against *The Sunday Times* by Carmen Proetta, the *Death on the Rock* key witness.

Gingerbread persons

Several Gateway stores have replaced gingerbread men with "non-sexist" snacks. Debbie Elliott, 33, of Minchhead, Somerset, said: "I thought it was a joke but someone in the store told me gingerbread men could be offensive." A Gateway spokesman said: "I understand a number of stores have adopted this idea but it is not company policy."

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Panto joke
soap opera

Howard hints at censorship laws on video violence

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

CAMPAIGNERS against violent video films and games are to step up their censorship calls after an encouraging meeting with Michael Howard.

The Home Secretary's acknowledgement that the issue poses a "big problem" has intensified the campaign among MPs of all parties for legislation to prevent children from seeing psychologically damaging material.

More than a hundred MPs have supported moves by David Alton, the Liberal Democrat MP, to stop videos that "are likely to cause psychological harm to a child". Even MPs opposed to new laws accept that the campaign is gaining momentum at Westminster and cannot be dismissed as a reaction to last year's trial of the two boys who killed James Bulger.

The judge at their trial referred to a possible connection between the boys' behaviour and exposure to violent video films such as *Child's Play 3*, which was rented by the father of one of them.

Mr Alton emerged from a meeting with Mr Howard optimistic that he could secure crucial government support for an amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill now before the Commons. Mr Alton cites a video game that asks players to choose between killing a woman by garroting or with a machete. "It is difficult to find words to condemn this sort of so-called game being available to children," he said. "No one can argue that [restriction] is right but it is a question of wording the law in such a way that the courts can act."

Mr Alton's supporters point to the inadequacy of laws on video games, under which the onus is on suppliers to offer their software to censors only if they include sexual activity or violence "to a significant extent".

Mr Alton calls for games and films to be put under the same classification rules as pornographic films, which are subject to censorship by the British Board of Film Classification. He also says that the UK category of pornographic film, which allows it to be available only in licensed sex shops, should be extended to violent films.

However, censorship officers say that only a handful of films came into the UK category last year. While Mr Howard is sympathetic to the need for tighter restrictions on violent videos, he is wary about introducing laws that prove unenforceable.

Mr Alton, MP for Mossley Hill, is supported by the Professional Association of Teachers and the NSPCC, which claim that children's behaviour is influenced by exposure to television, film and video violence. Home Office officials say that Mr Howard will give "careful consideration" to Mr Alton's proposals but will not take a final decision until he has received the results of research to be presented to him in March.

A spokesman added: "The British Board of Film Classification already has extensive powers to refuse classification where they think a film is too violent and can apply a tougher test for material intended to be viewed at home or on television."

But the film director Michael Winner said it was a "judicious notion" that the British should not be allowed to see what was shown in other countries. "It is quite fanciful to think that if you cut even more the sort of films that people in Europe and the rest of the world are allowed to see, you will suddenly turn everyone into angels."

"Many countries with films and videos far less censored than ours have a lower crime rate. There is no evidence that when you increase censorship, the crime rate drops. I would rather see the Home Secretary make it mandatory, as is being suggested in some states in America, that anyone convicted of a third violent offence goes to jail for life."

Leading article, page 15



Manchester fan Kieron Mulvey, 3, from Coventry, among the floral tributes on Sir Matt Busby Way, Old Trafford, yesterday

Nation's football grounds fall silent for Sir Matt

BY JOHN GOODBODY, PETER BALL AND RONALD FAIR

FOOTBALL grounds all over England will observe a minute's silence this afternoon as the national game pays homage to Sir Matt Busby, the former Manchester United manager, who died on Thursday.

No silence will be more poignant than that at Old Trafford, where United play Everton before 40,000 supporters. Also in the city are officials of UEFA, the European governing body, who will pay their respects at the draw for the 1996 European Championship, to be held in England.

The United players, heading towards their second successive Premiership title, have been told by manager Alex Ferguson that the result of the game today is "immaterial".

Ferguson added: "It will be a very difficult day. The best thing we can do is to go out and play in the way Sir Matt always wanted. We will tell the

players to just go out and enjoy it and put on a show."

Supporters will arrive at Old Trafford to find a carpet of flowers lying on Sir Matt Busby Way and also piled up beneath the plaque commemorating the Munich air disaster of 1958. The tributes salute the man, known as the father of football, who died aged 84, after nearly 50 years as manager, director and president of the club.

Seat No. 1, in the directors' box, from which Sir Matt had watched

recent matches, will be left empty. Flags will remain at half-mast throughout the city as it prepares for the funeral on Thursday. Sir Matt will be buried in the family grave at Manchester Southern Cemetery.

Bryan Robson, the club captain, said: "It is nice Sir Matt had the championship victory last season to treasure. I remember him in the stadium, applauding the lads."

Peter Barnard, page 14
Subdued draw, page 36

Boy took cars 'to impress lover, 44'

BY SIMON DE BRUXELLES

A TEENAGER who claimed he stole cars to impress his middle-aged lover was jailed for nine months yesterday.

Teesside Crown Court was told that the 16-year-old had made a similar claim before to justify crimes which have led to 20 convictions since the age of 12. Two years ago his 26-year-old social worker was forced to resign when he claimed in court that he had stolen cars to continue an affair with her.

This time, the court heard, the youth, who cannot be named, claimed to have had a three-month affair with a 44-year-old married woman.

The woman, who has three teenage sons and four grandchildren, told reporters: "This is a complete pack of lies which he has made up to try and save his skin. It's absolutely disgraceful that a solicitor can stand up in court and say this when we have had no opportunity to counter it."

Nick Woodhouse, for the defence, told the court his client was "emotionally damaged by his experiences with these two older women". Mr Woodhouse said that the boy, from Middlesbrough, was seduced by his 26-year-old tutor at the Aycliffe Centre for disturbed children in Co Durham in 1992.

He added: "She was supposed to develop a relationship with him to tackle his problems. But instead she effectively seduced him, encouraged him to abscond, and to stay overnight at her home. Finally she encouraged him to take her on vehicle-taking expeditions."

The tutor, Michaela Corkhill of Darlington, resigned in December 1992 after they were arrested in her car while he was on the run.

He pleaded guilty to going equipped for breaking into cars. Ms Corkhill was fined and disqualified from driving for being over the drink-drive limit. She denied having an affair with the boy.

The youth was arrested again last month after being spotted driving stolen cars in Redcar on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. A woman told the court how he twice narrowly missed her three young children while performing high-speed stunts.

Mr Woodhouse told the court: "The older woman lives in that area. To try to impress her he became involved once again not only in taking cars without consent but in driving fast and dangerously."

The youth admitted two charges of aggravated vehicle taking, four of taking other cars, driving while disqualified and without insurance. He was also banned for two years.

Killer was known to be a threat

BY A STAFF REPORTER

A FORENSIC psychiatrist tried to have an offender sent to Broadmoor two years before the man choked a seven-year-old boy to death, the Old Bailey was told yesterday.

Dr Anthony Wilkins, who specialises in treating sex offenders, said that after examining Colin Hatch he decided he was subject to "homicidal and violent fantasies". "My conclusion, then, was that he was highly dangerous and was likely to pose a serious threat to the safety of the public," Dr Wilkins told the jury.

He added that he recommended that Hatch be sent to a secure unit, preferably Broadmoor, but his advice was not accepted. "The indication I received from Broadmoor was that he was not considered to be dangerous enough," he told the court.

Hatch, 21, of Finchley, north London, admits the manslaughter of Sean Williams on July 19 last year on grounds of diminished responsibility but denies murder.

Dr Wilkins examined Hatch in 1991 when he was charged with indecent assault, assault and false imprisonment after an attack on an eight-year-old boy. Hatch was given a 3½-year prison term and was released after serving half his sentence.

The trial continues.

Panto jokes end soap opera case

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL

THE libel jury in the East-Enders "sex romp" case were entertained yesterday to a clash between two leading barristers.

George Carman QC, who said soap star Gillian Taylforth was "hardly" a president of the Mothers' Union, was himself hailed as the "Torvill and Dean" of advocacy by his adversary, Michael Beloff QC.

The bearded Mr Beloff, counsel for Miss Taylforth and her fiancé Geoffrey Knights, was making his closing speech in the case, which centres on whether the actress was engaged in oral sex on the AI when she stopped her Range Rover, or rubbing the stomach of her partner, who said he was feeling ill.

Speaking of Mr Carman, counsel for *The Sun*, Mr Beloff said: "He's the Torvill and Dean of advocacy rolled into one, but with this important difference — straight sixes for style, straight zeros for content."

Mr Beloff told the jury that when it came to exciting prejudice and evoking sympathy they had heard a "past and present master

of the art. "Mr Carman's final speech in a libel action is always a source of entertainment — especially if you hear it for the first time."

But, said Mr Beloff, he would "sooner take lessons on family values from Cinderella's ugly sisters."

Miss Taylforth, 38, who plays café-owner Kathy Beale in the BBC1 soap, and Mr Knights, 39, are suing News Group Newspapers for repeating a police allegation that they had oral sex on an AI slip-road after a day at Ascot races in June 1992. *The Sun* denies libel and says the story was true, but that if it were untrue, the Metropolitan Police were responsible as they supplied the information.

The location was "not exactly lovers' lane," said Mr Beloff, who added that such an act would be one of "sheer unvarnished humbug". "A jape? A dare? As John McEneaney used to say, 'You cannot be serious'."

Mr Justice Drake, who will complete his summing-up on Monday, told the jury that if they came to awarding damages, these should be reasonable.

From gulag to gulag

Alexander Solzhenitsyn found his freedom from Soviet oppression when he was expelled 20 years ago. But as soon as he had escaped from the land of the gulags this century's most influential author



created his own gulag in remote Vermont in order to complete his masterpiece, *The Red Wheel*. Now he is about to return to live in a changed Moscow where capitalism rules, moral decline is everywhere and his voice may no longer be heard.

Peter Taylor investigates the self-imposed exile of Russia's lost prophet in *The Sunday Times* tomorrow.



Big Apple.



First bite.

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Education officers fear effect on small primaries of 'terrifying' new campaign to raise standards

Hit squads target borderline schools

By BEN PRESTON, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

GOVERNMENT inspectors plan to take extra measures to stop bad schools plunging into spirals of decline. Professor Stewart Sutherland, the chief inspector, will announce today that his teams are preparing to intervene directly in more schools in a last-ditch attempt to pull them around.

The move by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) follows the first tranche of inspections under the new privatised regime.

Although 380 secondaries were inspected by registered, freelance teams last term, only one was judged to be failing its pupils. This is the first formal step in a complicated and lengthy process that can lead to John Patten, the Education Secretary, sending in a hit squad of outsiders.

Both ministers and the inspectorate expected the figure to be higher. Mr Patten had indicated previously that about 200 of 24,000 state schools might be failing, while

inspectors have estimated that one in 20 schools is a cause for concern.

However, Professor Sutherland, in a speech to the Society of Education Officers in Harrogate, will disclose that Ofsted plans to monitor "near miss" schools with serious problems in particular areas — an individual subject, or areas of discipline and management — which might have escaped detailed scrutiny.

Ofsted inspectors will assess the action plan which governing bodies are required to prepare in response to inspection reports. It will then visit the school to check the plan is being carried out effectively.

An Ofsted spokesman declined to estimate how many schools might be affected by the new procedure. However, it is likely that schools categorised as either a near miss or failing might total 5 per cent, or 15 last term.

Ofsted inspectors spent two days last week at Stratford

School, a grant-maintained comprehensive in east London. They were double-checking the verdict of private inspectors who identified it as failing last term. If Professor Sutherland agrees, Mr Patten will be left to decide its fate.

Government inspectors listed two other schools as failing in November. Crook primary in Co Durham and Brookside special school in Derby have until the end of the month to present action plans that persuade Mr Patten they can improve themselves.

Christopher Tittle, president of the SEO, told the conference yesterday that the prospect of inspection under the new regime was terrifying for small primary schools. "Colleagues tell me Crook primary was no worse than the average primary school, and a good deal larger. Unless inspectorate enthusiasm is tempered there could, without any sensible justification, be a lot more Crooks."



A primary pupil takes part in daily prayer: many children have a patchy knowledge of Christianity, inspectors say

Religious teaching 'inadequate'

THREE out of four religious education lessons in secondary schools are inadequate and many pupils have only a patchy knowledge of Christianity, according to an unpublished inspectors' report (Ben Preston writes).

The Ofsted study also highlights a chronic shortage of qualified teachers, and says not enough time is spent studying other religions.

The findings, leaked to the *Times Educational Supplement*, will raise the temperature of debate about religion in schools with Government advisers expected to publish the first model RE syllabuses on Tuesday to ensure Christianity is emphasised.

However, Ofsted says a recent Government requirement that school worship include a Christian element has led to "dull attempts to meet the requirements of the law. The concept of collective worship with a Christian emphasis for a group which may contain members of different faiths, and those who profess no religious belief, causes difficulty."

Du Cann sought loan as bankrupt

By CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT AND ANGELA MACKAY

SIR Edward du Cann, the former chairman of the Conservative Party, government minister and chairman of Lorrho, applied for a £325,000 mortgage without declaring that he is a bankrupt, an investigation by *The Times* has concluded.

An application, apparently by Sir Edward, was lodged with the Midland Bank in September last year. It would appear that he was hoping to raise funds to buy adjoining properties, costing £300,000 and £98,000, on Alderney, in the Channel Islands, where he is living in a rented house.

If his application had been successful, it is not known if Sir Edward would have disclosed his bankruptcy, which he is, according to the bank, until discharged. Whatever the case, government guidelines deem it a criminal offence to obtain credit of £250 or more, either alone or with a partner, without disclosing the bankruptcy.

Commander David Wright of Mitchell and Partners Ltd, the agents selling the houses, confirmed yesterday that Sir Edward had been interested in buying both properties but had abandoned his attempts.

The approach to the Midland Bank for the mortgage was made by David Aslam, a businessman. He applied on Sir Edward's behalf for the mortgage from a high street branch of the bank in London, according to Simon Yefet, his business partner. After the application, Sir Edward was telephoned by a bank official to discuss details. Mr Yefet said: "Mr Aslam tried to raise the money but the bank did not grant the loan. Mr Aslam

did not know Sir Edward was bankrupt when he made the application."

Peter Saunders, a solicitor acting for the 69-year-old bankrupt former MP, said Sir Edward vigorously denied making an application to the bank but conceded that Mr Aslam had made attempts on his behalf to see whether he could raise a mortgage in the event of a successful appeal against bankruptcy. Such an appeal failed at Taunton County Court in November.

When *The Times* first spoke to Mr Saunders, he flatly denied that his client had applied for a mortgage.

However, in a later telephone conversation he conceded that Sir Edward had been contacted by the bank. Asked if his bankruptcy was discussed, Mr Saunders said Sir Edward could not remember. He said: "It is quite clear Mr Aslam approached Midland Bank on Sir Edward's behalf. All I can say is that at no

time was Sir Edward trying to conceal the fact that he was a bankrupt."

Mr Saunders finally conceded that "Sir Edward was certainly looking for a mortgage but he would not have dreamt of taking it up while he was a bankrupt." An application may have been made on his behalf by David Aslam, he certainly spoke to the Midland. We are not saying that an approach wasn't made to the Midland, in outline, in relation to property that they would lend money against."

Sir Edward was declared bankrupt in the High Court on March 12 last year with debts of about £3 million. An appeal is expected next week.



Sir Edward: living in the Channel Islands

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BARCLAYS

Six months for death driver

RELATIVES of four people killed in an accident caused by an "expert" driver who drove too fast on a snow-covered road criticised his six-month jail sentence yesterday. David Edmonds, 55, a Norwich businessman, faced a maximum penalty of five years. The maximum was raised to ten years a few months after the accident last March that killed Wendy Critchlow, 24, her son Mark, 19 months, Leslie Henson, 49, and his wife Sylvia, 55. Paul Adams, 34, Mrs Henson's son, said: "His driving was sheer stupidity. To get just six months makes me feel sick. The family has been ripped apart."

A jury at Norwich Crown Court found Edmonds, who said he was a member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists, guilty of dangerous driving. He had driven at up to 65mph through snow and slush, overtaking a succession of cars.

As he returned to the inside lane his car spun round, crashing into the family's Austin Metro.

Biggs fails to steal his book show

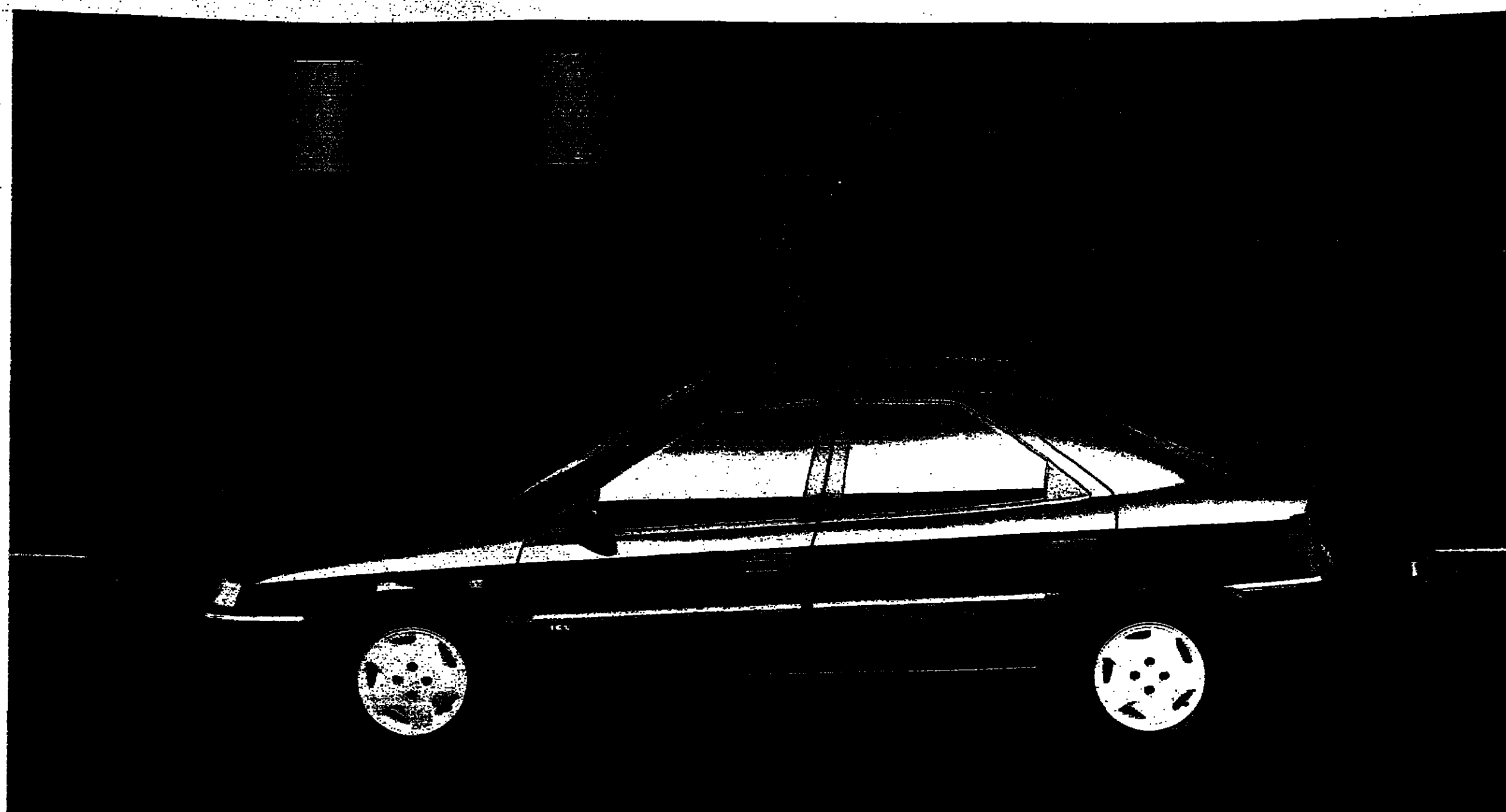
By ALISON ROBERTS
ARTS REPORTER

RONNIE Biggs was courting the cameras in London yesterday but still eluding Scotland Yard. Beamed in from Rio de Janeiro via a satellite link, the Great Train Robber helped to launch his autobiography with the audacity of one who believes in his own legend.

Biggs wrote *Odd Man Out* — "a frank and thrilling account of the life of a notorious but much-loved rogue", according to the publisher Bloomsbury — to supplement the living he earns by selling Ronnie Biggs T-shirts and charging tourists to visit him. "I think I would like Steven Berkoff to direct the film," he said. "It would have to be a big production."

Photographers snapped his face on the big screen at the Groucho Club but gone are the days when Biggs could steal the show. His last words were pure showbiz: "Good-bye, I love you all." The gathering of journalists and publishers responded with an embarrassed snigger.

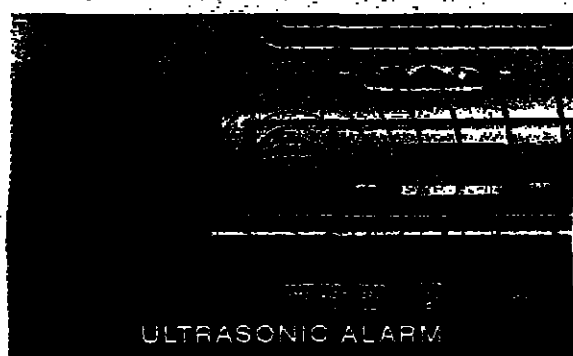
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No one that is except your local neighbourhood car thief.

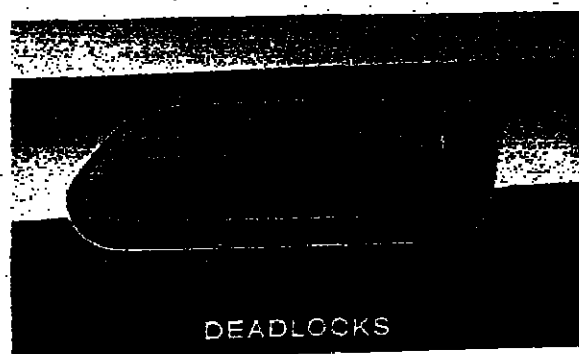
He would just love to get his light-fingered hands on such a sleek, stylish looking machine.



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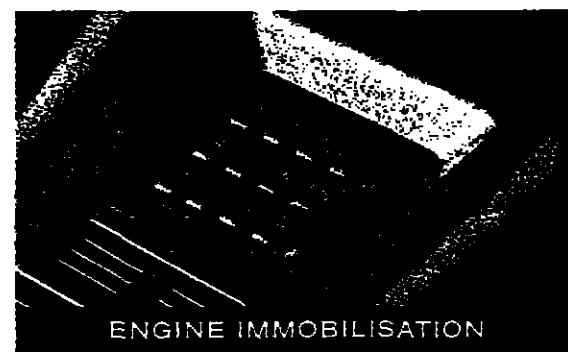
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and off it goes. But even though any thief would have hung up his crowbar in disgust by now, we didn't stop there.

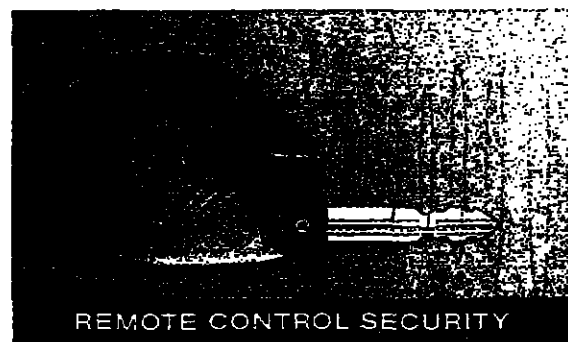
Most models are protected by an engine immobilisation device. Until your personal code has been punched into the key pad, the car cannot start.



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The Times predicts gloom when the Chancellor's first budget comes into force in April

How Mr Clarke is about to punish Mr Brown

By Lucy Berrington

BIG increases in taxes and household expenses under changes due to come into effect this year will not be offset by salary rises, according to the findings of a typical British family as calculated by The Times and Price Waterhouse.

Householders can take only limited measures to reduce the cost. The greatest assault comes in April in a package of measures combining tax changes introduced by Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and those of his predecessor Norman Lamont. There will be tax increases on wages, the first instalment of higher council tax bills for most householders, and the imposition of VAT on fuel.

The Times's calculations are based on the fictional Brown family, who live in a £100,000 semi-detached house in the southeast of England. Mr Brown earns £35,000 a year in management, and they have a £75,000 mortgage. The monthly repayments of £430 will increase by £10 from April, when mortgage interest relief is restricted to the 20 per cent lower rate.

One leading building society suggested this could be cushioned by changing to a fixed rate mortgage. Abbey National's, spanning five years at 7.15 per cent, is typical. Figures announced last month by John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, suggested an average rise of at least 7 per cent in council tax.

Independent analysts, basing their sums on local authority spending limits for this year and reductions in the transitional relief that smoothed the change from the poll tax, have said most bills will show increases of 12 to 15 per cent, possibly reaching 20 per cent for inner London households.

The Browns, whose house is in Band E, paid £800 council tax in 1993. However, Council Tax Legal Services suggests



Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, outside the Treasury yesterday as he summed up the state of the economy. The full force of his tax changes will be felt in April

that the Browns' tax will rise by between £56 and £120 this year.

Fuel bills are set to shoot up with the imposition of VAT. Electricity companies are contacting customers with information on how to pay early to avoid VAT, while British Gas is preparing for a rush of enquiries in February and March.

Those intending to pre-pay should do so by March 25. Topping up the account later this year means they will pay next year's VAT at 8 per cent rather than the full 17.5 per

cent rate to be introduced in April 1995. The Browns' fuel bill is £750 a year; 8 per cent VAT on fuel will add £60; 17.5 per cent will increase bills by £131. If they pre-pay £1,500 they will save about £191 in VAT, compared with a gain of £82 in interest if the money was invested in a typical instant access building society account over two years at current interest rates.

From October most householders will face a 3 per cent tax on general risk insurance premiums, covering travel, house contents, buildings and

personal accident insurance. The Browns are insured with Prudential which, like Pearl, has announced it will be absorbing the charge, but other companies will be passing it on to customers.

A spokeswoman for the Association of British Insurers said premium rates for the coming year were difficult to predict. "It is not likely that there will be such large rises as over the last couple of years: the market is very competitive."

Prudential has frozen its household insurance premi-

ums: insuring buildings and contents, on a new-for-old basis with no discounts, cost an average of £204.50 in Peterborough and £259.50 in Guildford. In general it is likely that increases will be more widespread next year, following the introduction of the tax in October.

Mr Brown's company Cavalier takes unleaded petrol. He drives 45 miles a day during the week and another 45 miles at weekends, amounting to mileage of 270 per week. His current petrol bill, for 45.5 litres, is £22.75 a week. In-

creases of 3p a litre add £1.37 a week. Mrs Brown's car covers 80 miles a week, using 13.5 litres of diesel at 52p a litre. Her weekly bill rises by 41p to £7.43. Between them the Browns face petrol bill rises of £92.56 a year.

Life's luxuries could leave the Browns £65 poorer this year. The family consumes five bottles of wine a week. Now paying an additional 2p per bottle, its annual bill increases by £5.20 a year.

Mr Brown smokes 20 cigarettes a day, currently costing £17 a week. Last month his bill

increased by 11p a day, adding £40.15 over the year; an additional 3 per cent tax on tobacco from December this year will add £26 in 1995. If the Browns delay their annual trip to the Continent until October they will face a new £5 airport passenger tax for each member of the family.

The Browns receive child benefit for their two children. From April, they will be paid £10.20 on behalf of the elder (a rise of 20p) and £8.25 (up from £8.10) for the younger. The combined increases amount to £18.20 a year.

Millions ponder mystery of the new tax codes

By Sara McConnell

ELEVEN million people have been told this week how much money they can earn before they start paying tax — many, with simple tax affairs, for the first time because of new restrictions on the married couples' allowance.

Here are some answers for people trying to crack their tax code.

Will I get a coding notice? If your circumstances have not changed since the last tax year, you will not get a coding notice. This is most likely to apply to single people with simple tax affairs and no taxable benefits like a company car or private medical insurance. The single persons' allowance has been frozen at £3,445 for 1994-95 and the code on your payslip, if you are employed, should be 344L. If you are married and/or have taxable benefits or other allowances, you should get one. Pensioners are likely to receive their notices over the next few weeks.

How is the code worked out? The taxman adds up all the allowances, which will appear on the left of the tax coding notice. He then deducts from this the value of taxable benefits such as company cars and private medical insurance, which will appear on the right. The total on the right is then subtracted from the total on the left.

For the first time this year, the words "ALLCE restriction" will appear in the right-hand column of married couples' codings, as well as codings of widows receiving bereavement allowance and people with additional personal allowances.

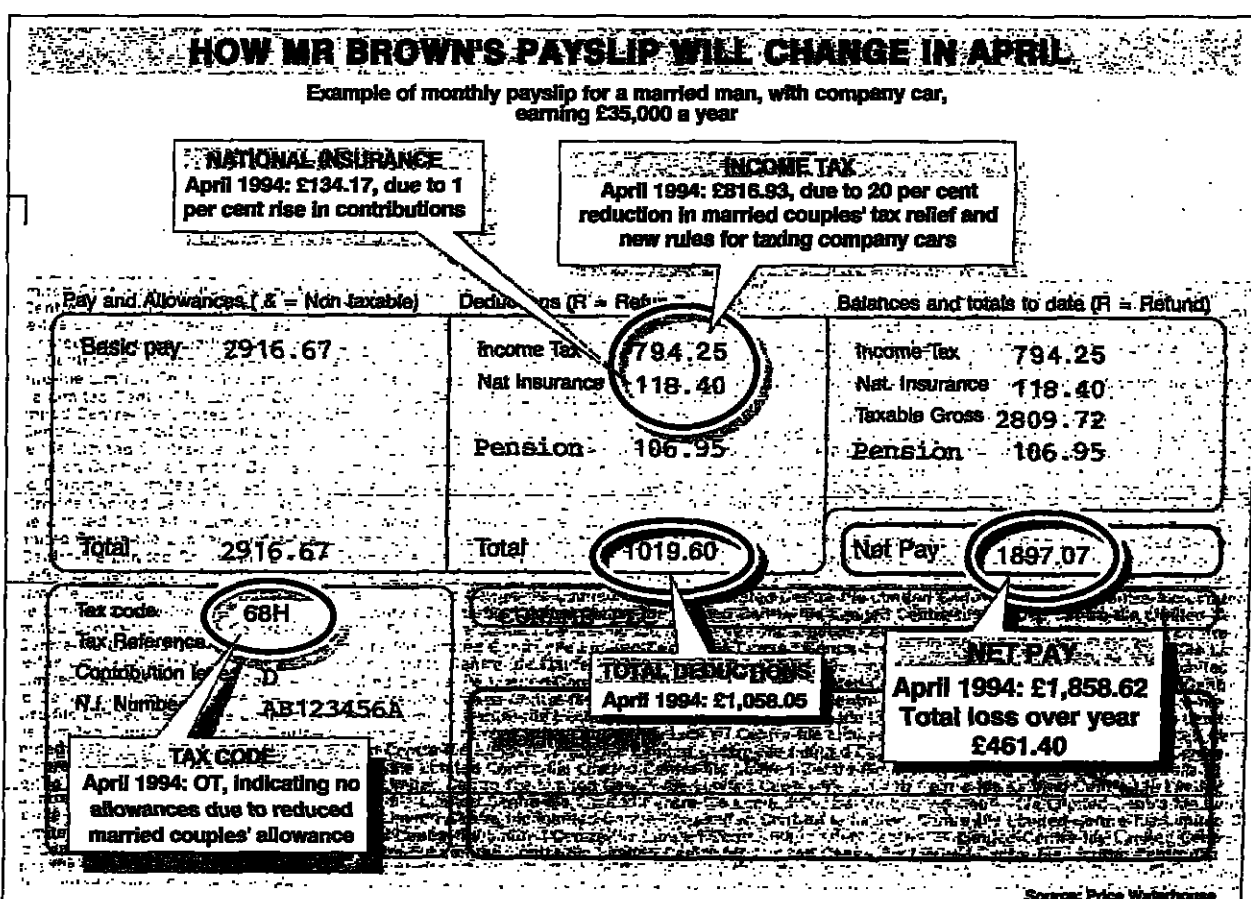
What does this mean? From April, the married couples' allowance for the under

65s, frozen at £1,720 for 1994-95, is restricted to 20 per cent. Allowances are set against income before tax is charged. The allowances reduce the amount on which you have to pay tax. This means the value of the allowance to you depends on the extra tax you would have paid if you had not had the reduction.

Until now, the amount of extra tax depends on the rate at which you pay tax (20 per cent, 25 per cent or 40 per cent) if you had not had the reduction. For a higher rate taxpayer the value of the allowance is £688, for a basic rate taxpayer £430 and for a 20 per cent taxpayer £344. After April 6, everybody's allowances will be calculated as if they were 20 per cent taxpayers. Higher and basic rate taxpayers with a personal and married people's allowance will see on their coding "ALLCE restriction" with a figure next to it.

We are married but over 65. Does this apply to us too? Yes, your allowance will be restricted to 20 per cent. But you will get an extra £200 tax allowance to make sure you are not disadvantaged.

How will the new company car tax rules show on my code? This will be calculated on the original manufacturer's list price after April. The words "car benefit" should appear on the right of the coding notice. The figures next to it should equal 35 per cent of the car's list price if you do under 2,500 business miles a year or about 23 per cent of the list price if you do between 2,500 and 18,000 business miles a year. If you do more than 18,000 miles the figure should be about 12 per cent of the list price.



Where the fiscal assault will draw blood

By a Staff Reporter

THE average British family is losing far more of its income to direct taxes than it did in the last year of the Labour Government, a Times survey showed last week. The disclosure strengthens claims that Kenneth Clarke's November Budget completes the biggest fiscal assault on the British economy in 30 years.

The graphic shows the changing pay slip of a fictional John Brown, who earns £35,000 a year. Mr Brown qualifies for a company car, a Cavalier type of 1994cc, but gets no other benefits in kind. Under a company car scale charge in 1993-94 he was taxed on £4,485; under a new system for 1994-95, based on the list price of £13,775 x 35 per cent, he will be taxed on £4,821.

Higher National Insurance contributions, rising from 9 to 10 per cent, will cost £15.77 this year. The restriction of the married couples' allowance — previously

assessed at the 40 per cent tax rate — to the 20 per cent lower rate increases his income tax by £22.68.

While Mr Brown's taxable gross, basic pay minus pension contributions remains at £2,809.72 in April, his tax code changes to OT, representing no allowances, because of the reduction in relief on the married couples' allowance. His net pay falls by £38.45.

Low inflation and high unemployment will mean minimal wage increases. Mr Brown will receive a 2 per cent rise in April 1995, bringing his basic monthly pay to £2,975.00. It will be whittled down by a slight increase in pension contributions, at 3.6 per cent, and National Insurance payments. He will be charged £840.13 income tax, £137.70 National Insurance and £107.10 for the pension. This leaves a net income of £1,890.07 a month — a gain of only £31.45, despite the pay rise.

□ Tax collectors "wrote off" almost twice

as much outstanding tax in 1992 as in the previous year as part of a campaign to reduce the backlog of uncollected taxes.

Stephen Dorrell, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said that more than £16 billion — almost half the £3.7 billion of uncollected revenue at the end of the financial year 1991-92 — was wiped off the amount officially said to be owed to the Inland Revenue.

In previous years, the tax man has given up on less than a fifth of tax owed by businesses and individuals.

Officials put the surge in written-off tax down to a streamlined system of tax collecting, under which investigators do not pursue hopeless cases for years on end.

Ministers decided that the amount of uncollected tax, which peaked at £4.3 billion in 1991, gave an unrealistic impression of the amount which the Treasury could expect to collect.

Revenue queries surge

By Edward Gorman

TAX offices are recording a surge in calls from people anxious about the April increase in their tax bills.

The Inland Revenue said yesterday that this was partly a result of the many more tax coding notices sent out this year. Because more people are affected by the changes, the Inland Revenue has sent out 11 million coding notices, compared with 8 million last year.

A spokeswoman, Lynn Simpson, said there was no way of establishing what the main preoccupation of callers was, but she guessed changes in the married couples' allowance topped the list.

"It's up to individuals to decide how they manage," Ms Simpson said. "The positive message we want to put across is that if people do want more information from us, then please get in touch."

Ian Luder, personal tax partner at Arthur Andersen, the accountants, said that he had not seen an increase in enquiries from customers because the company had made considerable efforts to forewarn clients.

He said: "The overall impact depends on the client's income. You'd be taking different decisions at £30,000 than at £80,000. I was not surprised at the [poor] retail sales figures earlier this week, because these are sizeable chunks out of family income."

Mr Luder said the increased tax would hurt more people than in the past because in the current economic climate employers were unlikely to offer significant salary rises to offset tax increases.

"There was a time when these types of tax increases would have been passed on to the employer — I don't think that will happen this time," he said.

In other words, we're flying to Hong Kong.

Daily from Heathrow. From Feb 21.

Contact your travel agent or call 0293-747747.



Parents mourn Samantha, 21, latest victim of lethally pure heroin in city cursed by drug price war

'Evil pushers robbed me of my daughter'

By BILL FROST

THE parents of a young woman who became the latest addict to die after taking lethally pure heroin yesterday spoke of their two-year battle to get her off drugs.

Samantha Bultitude, 21, died in Bristol Royal Infirmary on Wednesday after injecting a powerful dose of heroin, which some dealers are now selling all but uncut. Yesterday Janet and Robert Bultitude described how the drug had swiftly destroyed an intelligent young woman from an affluent home and a private education, who had once wanted to be a model.

"Samantha had it all," Mrs Bultitude said. "She went to a private school, she went on holidays and she had a loving family. She loved life, loved tennis and dancing. But she got caught up in this web. I keep asking myself whether I could have done anything different."

Samantha began experimenting with heroin after

leaving her high school in Bristol. She was soon addicted and lost her cheerful nature and ambition.

Mrs Bultitude said: "I knew something was wrong and kept asking her if she was taking anything. She kept saying 'I'm not, I'm not'. I only found out when she was completely hooked and she confessed. We went to the doctor together. We tried to get her off it for two years."

Earlier this week, Samantha had promised her parents that she would again try to come off the drug. Mr Bultitude told how he had furnished a flat for Samantha after she had begun working at a bookshop. "We set Samantha and her boyfriend up and paid the first month's rent. But they sold the furniture to pay for drugs."

He said: "Samantha fell in with friends who thought it would be exciting to take drugs. I just want everyone to know it's not glamorous. It

has shattered our family." Mrs Bultitude, speaking from their home near Weston-super-Mare, urged the police to act against those peddling the lethally pure heroin. "I had to watch my daughter die because of these evil pushers. They killed Samantha and robbed me of a daughter."

□ The lethal effects of the heroin circulating in Bristol were not, as is often the case, the result of contamination or adulteration but its purity (Dr Thomas Stuttaford writes). The drug abusers unwittingly bought a purer heroin than usual and so gave themselves a much larger dose.

Over-dosage with heroin is particularly liable to produce respiratory depression: the centre in the brain that controls breathing is knocked out by the drug. If the dose is big enough, it will cause a lowering of the blood pressure and circulatory failure, and the brain and kidneys may be starved of blood supply.



Samantha Bultitude: sold furniture her parents had bought to finance habit

Nine arrested as death toll mounts

By LYN JENKINS

POLICE investigating the deaths of up to nine people from unusually pure heroin being sold on the streets of Bristol have made a number of arrests in a series of raids. Seven men and two women have been released on police bail while drug samples are analysed to see if they match the lethal heroin.

Drug squad officers believe the high grade heroin is the result of rivalry between dealers after the market became flooded and the price fell from £32,000 a kilo to £21,000. The price on the streets has dropped to £10 a gram.

Supplies, which are usually cut with glucose or baby milk powder, normally contain less than 40 per cent heroin. The batch responsible for the deaths has 63 per cent. Another five people, among them a 16-year-old girl, are recovering from seizures brought on by the lethal batch.

Chief Insp Peter Wills, deputy commander of Trinity Road district, which includes the drug dealing area of St

Paul's, said: "Despite the publicity on the dangers of the drug, people are still intent on buying. We are astonished activity has not decreased at all."

He added: "Registered users know where they should go to get their appropriate dose. The people we are warning are those who are not registered but are willing to buy drugs from anyone."

Addicts visiting the Bristol Drugs Project in the heart of the city are warned about the potential dangers of drugs bought on the street. Ian Sherwood, the director, said users should test out any of the drug very carefully. "We try to remind them that if something does go wrong not to panic but to call an ambulance."

Local newspapers and radio stations started carrying warnings at Christmas, since when four people have died. There had been five deaths before that and police, who believe the high grade heroin is still available, think they are all linked.

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE
CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Adams loses

Michael Adams' prospects in the Fide championship have been dealt a severe blow by his loss to Boris Gelfand. Scores after round four (round five played today):

Salov v Khalifman 2.5-0.5
Kamsky v Van der Sterren 3-1
Anand v Yusupov 2.5-1.5
Kramnik v Yusupov 2.5-1.5
Gelfand v Adams 2.5-1.5
Timman v Lautier 2-2

Yusupov strikes back

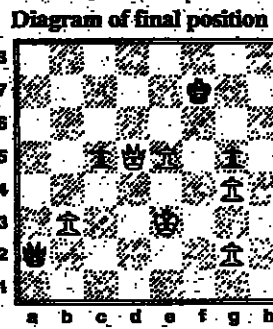
White: Artur Yusupov

Black: Vishy Anand

Grinfeld Defence

1 d4 Nf6
2 d5 e6
3 Nc3 Bg7
4 Bf4 0-0
5 e3 d5
6 dxc5 dxc4
7 Rc1 dxc4
8 Bxc4 Nc6
9 Nf3 Qc5
10 Bg5 Nf6
11 0-0 Qc5
12 Qc2 Nf6
13 Bg5 h6
14 Bh4 g5
15 Rfd1 Ng3
16 Bg3 Rg8
17 Ng3 Bc7
18 Nd5 Qc7
19 Rc2 Be8
20 Nxe8 Rxd1+
21 Qxd1 Rxe8
22 Bf4 Qd8
23 Qc1 Qe7
24 Rd2 bxc6
25 Bxc6 Rxd2
26 b3

28 Nc2 Qc7
29 Qc2 Qc5
30 g4 Kf8
31 Nc4 J5
32 B3 Bf6
33 Kf2 Kg7
34 Kf1 Bc8
35 e4 b4
36 Bf4 Qc5
37 Qf2 Qe7
38 Qd4+ Kg8
39 Ke2 Bb6
40 Nc6 a6
41 Qc5 Qc8
42 Qc8+ Kf7
43 Qd2 Ke8
44 Kf3 f5
45 Qd6 Kf7
46 Qd7+ Kf6
47 Qc8+ Kf7
48 e5 Qe6
49 Qd7+ Kg8
50 Kf3 Qe2
51 Qe8+ Kf8
52 Qd6+ Ke8
53 Qe6+ Kf8
54 Qf5+ Ke8
55 Qc8+ Kf7
56 Qd7+ Kf8
57 Qc8+ Kf7
58 Qd5+ Black resigns



Winning move, page 36

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Essex man's hot hatchback finally runs out of road

BY KEVIN EASON, MOTORING CORRESPONDENT

FORD has scrapped its XR "hot hatchback" range, a victim of spiralling insurance premiums and a reputation as a favourite with joyriders.

The Fiesta XR2i and Escort XR3i were motoring icons of the Eighties, when the term hot hatchback was coined and dealers found they could sell as many of the models as they could get. The cars became symbols of a generation of young, working-class motorists who wanted speed and style but could not afford a Porsche. The Escort XR3i came to be considered the perfect vehicle for "Essex man".

Britain's biggest car company said yesterday that sales had slumped as insurance premiums for GTI-style models more than doubled in three years. Output of XR3s has dropped to 3 per cent of production from a peak of nearly 20 per cent. Privately, executives were increasingly concerned about the image of cars named by police and insurers as being among models with the biggest risk of being stolen or in an accident. Insurance companies are delighted with the decision and believe that Ford has decided to end the Eighties' obsession with speed and performance and switch to safety and security as more fitting for the Nineties.

Neil Graham, motor underwriting development manager for General Accident, said yesterday: "Anything that can be done to curb the attraction of hot hatchbacks is a good thing for everyone." Gail Roberts, motor underwriting manager for Sun Alliance, said: "We decided to get out of the hot hatchback business because of the level of theft and accidents. Ford is making the right decision."

Other car companies were studying that decision last night but seem unlikely to follow yet.

Although the XR cars were not necessarily as powerful as some of their competitors, they conveyed a strong, young im-

age with the addition of a rear spoiler and often colourful graphics. Julian Rendell, news editor of *Autocar & Motor*, said: "There are a lot of high performance cars about but they are becoming more understated. The XR3i fashion of a few years back, with huge graphics and wings on the back, has gone."

The young profile of the drivers drawn by the XR's low prices also helped to kill it off. The sales boom was matched by a rise in accidents and thefts as the car's brash image attracted inexperienced drivers and thieves. Sun Alliance calculated that hot hatchbacks were twice as likely to be in an accident or to be stolen than an ordinary saloon.

Insurance premiums soared. A 25-year-old man living in Luton, Bedfordshire, would have paid £549 to insure an XR3i in 1990. The premium quoted by the AA yesterday was £1,196. In the 20 insurance group ratings, which run from the cheapest to the dearest, the car is rated 15.

James Duffell at Norwich Union, Britain's biggest motor insurer, said: "It was the appeal of those cars to thieves which became alarming and forced the industry to act."

More than a dozen other models remain on Norwich Union's "S-list", a security list of cars which must be fitted with anti-theft devices costing up to £450 before the company will offer insurance on them. The list includes the Volkswagen Golf GTI, Peugeot 205 GTI 1.9, BMW M3, Renault 19 Cabriolet turbo, Lancia Delta Integrale, Rover Metro 1.4 GTI, Fiat Uno Turbo and Ford's Sierra XR4i and Sierra Ghia 4x4 estate.

Ford will continue to offer high performance cars with its RS1800 and RS2000 models, although they are comparatively specialist vehicles. The Fiesta and Escort ranges will be topped by less powerful Si cars using a 90 brake horsepower, 1.6 litre engine, instead of a 105bhp, 1.8 litre.

Jobs pledge forgotten as Treasury demands fresh defence cuts



The 3,700 workers at Rosyth dockyard are again facing the prospect of redundancy

Rosyth's future back in doubt

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

ROSYTH royal dockyard is again under threat because of growing doubts in the Ministry of Defence that it can find cuts demanded by the Treasury of more than £1.5 billion over the next three years.

The ministry has extended its defence cost study into how support services can be cut. Rosyth has been thrown back into the ring despite a pledge from Malcolm Rifkind, the Defence Secretary, that the Rife yard would be guaranteed refitting work on more than half the fleet for 12 years. This was to compensate for losing the £5 billion Trident submarine refit contract awarded to Devonport dockyard in Plymouth.

Mr Rifkind rejected the navy's recommendation to keep only one yard, and save £300 million by closing Rosyth, which employs about 3,700 people. He could now be forced to reverse this decision because the Treasury has demanded bigger savings. It seems unlikely that the study team would recommend maintaining two yards with the Royal Navy's destroyer/frigate force being reduced to 35.

The financial dilemma facing the ministry's study teams could have been eased if the navy had any prospect of selling its four new Upholder class diesel-powered submarines which were axed last year. However, no country has come forward with a realistic proposition to buy or lease the boats, which are equipped with the most advanced technology and cost a total of £900 million. One

ministry source said that since it would cost money to mothball the Upholders, the four boats could just "rust away" once they are taken out of service next year.

The cost study into defence support services, announced by Mr Rifkind after the Budget last November, is turning out to be more comprehensive in its potential for cuts than the Options for Change programme under which the three armed services and civilian staff are being reduced by 20 per cent. The officials working on the study have been given the target of saving £750 million each year from 1996-97.

Officials are sceptical that cuts in support services will be enough to meet such a challenging target, and experts from the private sector have been recruited to help. They include Sir Peter Levene, former chief of defence procurement and now John Major's efficiency adviser, and Christopher Littmoden, Marks & Spencer's finance director.

The expansion of the cost study, which is due to be finished in March, has underlined the growing belief in the ministry that thousands of people in support areas will have to be made redundant.

At the end of next month, the army will issue redundancy notices to 6,300 officers and men in the third phase of cutbacks under the Options for Change programme. There have been so many volunteers that it is anticipated only about 100 will need to be made compulsorily redundant.

Moral debate lacks fertile soil of common ground

W henever there is a news story that begs a moral question, elderly mothers who have fertility treatment, "designer babies", adulterous ministers of the crown, and so on, we hear a variety of people — clergy, politicians, teachers, journalists — contributing the "moral" view.

The debate surrounding the Prince of Wales and his future

as head of the Church of England was a case in point, where clergy held forth about his alleged adultery as if there were anything new to say about infidelity except that it is wrong.

The extension of that debate into whether someone who allegedly contravened his marriage vows is fit to be head of state is another example. Or an MP, in the case of Tim Yeo.

Credo

Julia Neuberger

Out come the moralists again, as if there were anything new to say about lying and deceit. So too with Sunday trading. Shrill voices were raised about "keeping Sunday special", while others argued sanctimoniously for people to be able to work and to shop when they pleased, as if these were human rights.

But we rarely have a proper moral debate in Britain. All these matters have been linked with news stories, or with a political move towards "family values". Such debate as does take place is so rarified as to be largely inaccessible to the general public. A serious enquiry into what

we really think about marriage would be valuable. It might even inhibit some of the condemnatory remarks. Equally valuable would be a genuine debate about family values, and whether we have a shared sense of family at all in this society as we approach the millennium.

Such debates require time, allowing people to come to a consensus, or at least to change their minds with the argument. They need to be held in a variety of scenarios, from television to radio, from newspapers to magazines, in universities, schools and colleges, clubs and places of worship.

Instead of the occasional high-flown contribution in *The Times*, we need to see moral debate in the mass media and in places where people meet — without hysteria, condemnation, or a sense

of having to take sides. It might be regarded as eccentric, therefore, that I should be writing this in the rarified columns of *The Times*. I do it in the knowledge that it is time we went beyond the quality press, and asked ordinary men and women what they think about issues of extraordinary importance to us all.

Without such an attempt to get moral debate going, we will hear increasingly shrill and empty condemnatory comments. With it, we might be able to shape a vision of our future society, what values we genuinely hold dear, and where real differences in moral sensibilities lie.

□ Rabbi Julia Neuberger is chairman of the Camden & Islington Community Health Services (NHS) Trust.

At Your Service, Weekend page 7

NEWS IN BRIEF

Jail officer quits after love claim

A woman prison officer who is alleged to have had a romance with a prisoner has left her job. Sue Young has been on leave while an investigation was carried out by authorities at Albany jail, Newport, Isle of Wight, into her relationship with prisoner Ricky Fear.

Fear, serving seven years for indecent assault and robbery, was moved from Albany to neighbouring Camp Hill, after love letters were found in his cell.

Yesterday Max Morrison, the governor of Albany, said: "Despite this unfortunate incident, I think women officers play a vital role in the prison service. Often they can defuse situations by acting as a shoulder to cry on."

Priest charged

Father John Gerard Smyth, 66, a Roman Catholic priest from Ballyjamesduff, Co. Cavan, Eire, has been charged with nine offences of indecent assault. He was remanded on £100 bail by Belfast magistrates, ordered to lodge £1,000 in court and to stay out of West Belfast.

Victim buried

Wayne Lomas, a car dealer and petty criminal found buried in concrete under the floorboards of a house in Bristol last October, has been laid to rest five years after his murder.

Trainer's scoop

A Scottish landscape by Joseph Farquharson bought by Barbara Woodhouse, the television dog trainer, for £20, is expected to make about £20,000 at auction.

Helping heaths

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has launched a drive to reverse the decline of lowland heaths — one of Britain's most endangered habitats.

Caught out

Poacher Melville Selwood of Newport, Gwent, has been jailed for two months at Cardiff Crown Court after claiming salmon had accidentally swum into his nets.

Knife attack

A woman aged 24 was slashed in the face and arms as she walked from work in Windsor, Berkshire.

Dim view

Electricity workers at their annual dinner by candlelight because of a power cut at Coventry.

Bus wreckers

Joyriders who stole a double-decker bus demolished a set of traffic lights in Reading.



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Quake's victims swamp aid teams

FROM BEN MACINTYRE
IN LOS ANGELES

EMERGING from the rubble of the city's worst earthquake, many Los Angeles residents now find themselves caught in a thicket of red tape as federal officials try frantically to cope with the demands for help in the wake of the disaster.

Eleven disaster relief centres opened by the Federal Emergency Management Agency on Thursday were immediately swamped by thousands of people rendered homeless, penniless or desperate by the earthquake. The death toll has now risen to 51 and thousands of homes were still without electricity or water yesterday.

Responding to the demand, the agency said it planned to open six more relief centres and fly in hundreds of extra staff amid criticism that it had badly underestimated the number needing help. Only a fraction of applicants, some of whom arrived 15 hours before doors opened, received the immediate aid promised. Thousands more were told to fill out application forms, wait for an appointment, or come back the next day. The bureaucratic process could take days or weeks to complete.

At one of the emergency centres a man stole a pile of application forms from a police officer and began selling them to those waiting in line for \$5 (\$3.30) each. Several fistfights broke out as officials tried to persuade applicants to use the telephone rather than stand in line.

With cold wet weather predicted for the weekend in California, officials tried to persuade the estimated 15,000 people still camping out in the city's parks to return home or take refuge in Red Cross shelters. The National Guard has offered to provide tents for homeless victims or those too frightened to return home.

Bilingual "reassurance teams" composed of psychologists, city officials and building engineers, have been sent out through the parks, which are largely occupied by Spanish-speaking immigrants, amid concern that the refugee camps could prove a health hazard. City engineers have inspected just one-third of more than 3,800 houses and other structures damaged by the earthquake, and declared more than 500 of these to be uninhabitable.

There's no such thing as an instantaneous fix, Henry Cisneros, the housing and urban development secretary, said as he was mobbed by angry crowds at one emergency centre.



Sergeant Ralph Beach of the Bowling Green, Kentucky, police feeling the blast as a gas main explodes in a burning home. A woman and a child were treated in hospital, but there were no reported fatalities as a series of gas explosions caused fires in four homes and prompted an evacuation

US insists support for Russia hinges on sticking to reform

BY MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON, ANATOL LIEVEN IN MOSCOW AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

PRESIDENT Clinton expressed concern yesterday that President Yeltsin's conservative new Cabinet may fail to control Russia's rampant inflation and issued a warning that continued international support would depend on the government sticking to its radical economic reform programme.

Mr Clinton's remarks came as the new Russian government, at its first meeting in Moscow, signalled the more conservative economic policy predicted by Western observers. Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Prime Minister, declared his intention to give higher subsidies to Russian industries

brought to a halt by lack of money. Last night Grigori Yavlinsky, a respected economist and leader of a reformist group in the Russian parliament, criticised the new approach, saying that it might well lead to hyperinflation by the autumn, playing into the hands of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the neo-Fascist leader. The resignations of Boris Fyodorov, the Finance Minister and the second key reformer after Yegor Gaidar, the former Deputy Prime Minister, and Mr Chernomyrdin's pledge "to bury market fundamentalism" have embarrassed Mr Clinton, who received firm assurances of

Mr Yeltsin's unswerving commitment to bold economic reform at last week's Moscow summit, and are causing consternation within the US Administration about Russia's future course.

Asked whether the two resignations meant the end of Mr Yeltsin's reform programme, Mr Clinton replied: "I wouldn't go that far." But, he continued, "what we're concerned about obviously is whether they'll be able to manage their inflation problem."

How much economic help the West gave Russia would be "directly related to what kind of reforms they decide to

undertake," Mr Clinton said. "They'll have to make those decisions for themselves." Last summer's G7 summit of industrialised nations in Tokyo approved a \$28 billion (£18 billion) macro-economic assistance package for Russia, but barely \$3 billion has been disbursed to date because Russia has been unable to fulfil stringent conditions, including sharply reduced inflation, laid down by the International Monetary Fund.

The IMF is due to start new talks shortly with the Russian government on its economic programme, but these could now be delayed as Mr Fyodorov was the IMF's principal interlocutor. "Russia has not even got a Finance Minister right now, let alone a budget for 1994," an IMF source said.

Mr Chernomyrdin insisted he still favoured some reform, but nothing too radical. Washington officials believe the economic hardships that are fuelling the resurgence of Russia's Communists and ultranationalists are the result of too little reform, not too much.

"We are disappointed that these two reformers are not going to be playing a role in the future government," a White House spokesman said. He added that the Administration always based its policies on programmes, not on personalities, and it would wait and see.

The view of Western and Russian analysts in Moscow is that, under pressure from the opposition victory in last month's elections, President Yeltsin has been forced to back down by Mr Chernomyrdin. The Prime Minister is widely seen as himself harbouring presidential ambitions, possibly even before the presidential elections due in 1996. Mr Yeltsin has alienated some of his radical reformist supporters, and may find himself isolated by Mr Chernomyrdin's new administration. Last night President Yeltsin lost two leading Western economic advisers: Jeffrey Sachs of the United States and Anders Aslund of Sweden said they had resigned after his government's change of course.

Russian vote, page 1
Leading article, page 15

Lenin embalmers woo the rich

BY ANATOL LIEVEN

IT WAS the 70th anniversary of the death of Lenin yesterday, but unless you are a reader of Pravda you would hardly have known it in Moscow.

Five years ago the day would have been marked by parades, articles on the front page of every newspaper and numerous academic celebrations. The huge museum to Lenin at Gorky, near Moscow, where he died in 1924, was completed in 1987, a mere four years before the collapse of the state that he founded.

Only Pravda, still loyal to the Communist opposition, had an article yesterday on Lenin. A few dozen mainly elderly Communists gathered to lay flowers outside Lenin's mausoleum in Red Square, but that is now closed. The Mayor of Moscow has proposed that Lenin's body should be removed and buried beside his mother in St Petersburg. This was Lenin's own wish, disregarded by his Communist successors. The nearby Lenin museum was also

closed in November, and some exhibits have apparently been vandalised.

In what Lenin would doubtless have seen as the final insult, far more Russian press attention has been paid in recent days to a decision by the laboratory responsible for preserving his embalmed body. The Centre for Biological Structures said on Wednesday that it will now mummify anyone, at a cost of up to \$300,000 (£200,000) per long-term corpse. Its workers say they hope to sell their services to "rich Americans".

In its discreet advertising, the centre says that it has unparalleled experience in its field, which has also involved embalming Stalin (temporarily), Ho Chi Minh and the leaders of East Germany and Angola. They say that Lenin himself is in "excellent condition".

In another indignity, scientists who recently examined Lenin's brain — kept separately from the body — reported that there is "nothing very special" about it.



A bust of Lenin, part of an order the Russian government cancelled

Third candidate rejects Clinton defence job

FROM WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU
IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Clinton is finding that nobody wants to serve as his Defence Secretary. Yet another candidate — the third this week — has said he is not interested in the job.

Warren Rudman, a former Republican senator and the co-author of a well-known deficit reduction law, withdrew shortly before a scheduled meeting with Mr Clinton, citing "strictly personal reasons". The appointment of a Republican would have been greeted as a generous bipartisan gesture, but also as a shrewd political move that would have enabled the Democrats to deflect some of the criticism they face over defence cuts.

Earlier Sam Nunn, the Democratic chairman of the Senate armed services committee, who would have been a popular choice with the military, said he was not interested in the job he is thought to have once coveted.

The post became vacant last month after Mr Clinton dismissed Les Aspin, a tireless reformer who proved ineffectual at a time of unprecedented financial and social upheaval in the American military. Mr Clinton's first nominee to replace Mr Aspin, retired Admiral Bobby Ray Inman, withdrew on Tuesday at a bizarre press conference in which he accused the media of "modern McCarthyism". A series of articles had criticised his business dealings and his failure to pay a household tax.

■ The President is having difficulty finding a suitable replacement for Les Aspin as Defence Secretary. His own troubled dealings with the military are partly to blame

Mr Rudman's decision highlights the difficulty Mr Clinton has had in assembling a defence team at a time when military cutbacks render top jobs at the Pentagon unattractive and politically treacherous. The work of Mr Clinton's Defence Secretary will not be made any easier by the President's uneasy relationship with the American military.

The favourite candidate now is William Perry, 66, a former engineering professor who is currently Deputy Defence Secretary. Mr Perry is considered a "safe pair of

hands", possibly the most important quality at present.

The White House said yesterday that the President was considering a new shortlist of candidates, but was unlikely to announce his nomination before the weekend.

In an interview with CNN to mark the first anniversary of his taking office, Mr Clinton refused to be drawn into naming possible candidates. He still seemed shaken by Admiral Inman's decision, and ruminated about a bipartisan initiative to reform the nomination process. He said that the process presently took too long.

"I've talked to several Republicans and Democrats, who have no particular axe to grind now, who think maybe it's time to have a bipartisan look at this whole appointments process. It takes too long to get somebody confirmed. It's too bureaucratic. You have two and three levels of investigation. I think it's excessive."

Mr Clinton defended himself against criticisms of his appointments record. He said that some nominees hit difficulties because of two relatively new developments: the household tax and Congress's increasing scrutiny of a candidate's writings.



Nunn: declined post he had once coveted

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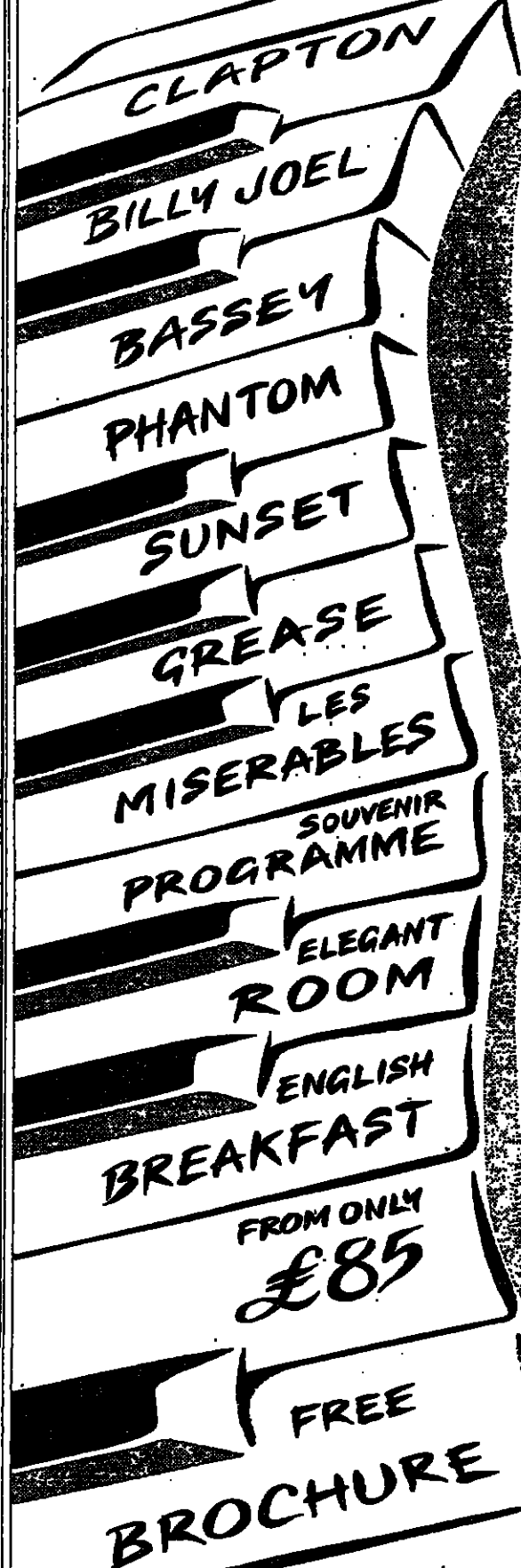
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Out-of-step France neglects vital reforms amid dreams of federal Europe

Balladur's spell survives slow march of decline

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN PARIS

A POSTER campaign for chocolate biscuits appeared around France this week. It features a picture of the popular playground snack with the words: "Please, Monsieur le Ministre, leave a little room in their satchels".

The advertisements illustrate the mentality of France in a week which saw teachers and left-wing parents stage the biggest protest march for a decade and which paradoxically saw the ratings of Edouard Balladur, the Prime Minister, rocket to new heights. Behind the advertisers' plea is the French assumption that it is natural for the state, embodied by the Education Minister, to regulate pupils' lives, down to the contents of their school bags.

For further evidence of the selling power of high office, listen to another commercial, which features a generic minister singing the praises of a certain car. This Gallic faith in the wisdom of paternalistic politicians and an omnipotent civil service is running as strong as ever as the country trudges through a recession which is spreading despair about the very survival of France, at least as a nation that counts.

M. Balladur may proclaim, as he did yesterday, that the worst of the recession is over, but few heed his optimism because little seems to be going right. Unemployment, biting deeper than in any big Western democracy, is seen as a permanent sclerosis. The yearning for the certainties of the past is great when even those glories of French modernity, the TGV fast train and the Airbus have just been humbled. A TGV was derailed recently and a juicy export order has fallen through. The latest Airbus, the 330, suffered two undercarriage failures when it entered service this week and a new 340 Jumbo was destroyed in a ground fire.

The phenomenon of the courtly M. Balladur, whose setbacks have done nothing to slow his lead in the still hypothetical race to succeed President Mitterrand, reflects the longing for the imagined grandeur and security of old France. Out of step, as usual, with the mood among its rivals, France is shunning leadership by the baby-boom generation, worshipping instead a subjunctive-loving patrician of Levantine origin who could have leaped straight from the Edwardian age. An exasperated Michel Rocard, the Socialist leader, calls him a hypnotist and anaesthetist, but his skill is really just the supply of high-octane reassurance.

Even last Sunday's march against the government's attempt to finance private schools was much less a revival of the demoralised left than a nostalgic re-enactment by old-style Socialists of the church-state battles of the 19th century. Another replay of civil trauma of that period is under way with the centenary of the Dreyfus affair.



Rocard: unable to beat rival's hypnotic skills

Even in M. Balladur's own party, especially among supporters of Jacques Chirac, the more radical Gaullist chief, and his main rival, there is concern that the Prime Minister may lose the chance for the reforms which France needs to compete in the 21st century. His biggest break with the past is the privatisation of the state sector. Elf-Aquitaine, the largest industrial concern, is the latest to be sold off.

However, most of M. Balladur's actions smack of the old dirigiste approach and suggest he is loath to let markets do their work. His team is now trying to pour more millions into Air France and it is fighting a Brussels scheme, supported by Britain, to force state-owned airlines to face open competition. Brussels is also opposing a state bailout to Groupe Bull, the state computer group. M. Balladur's team is fighting deregulation on a host of fronts and has just given millions to the ailing print media in the interest of preserving "diversity".

On the social front, diversity is the last thing France seems to want as the Balladur team cracks down on immigration and encourages immigrants to go home or assimilate. The fear over the survival of the French identity reaches across the spectrum, gathering strength on the fringes of the left and right and affecting all classes.

The masses are being told that France is falling victim to the global tide towards *libéralisme sauvage*, as unrestrained competition is termed. For the ruling elite, this force translates as American cultural dictatorship and the replacement of a federal Europe built in France's image by a ragged continental trade zone which will be dominated by Germany. The universal nature of this fear was underlined this week by



Edouard Balladur, a reassuring Prime Minister with a touch of the grandeur of the French past, enjoys rising support among voters despite a painful recession

cries of alarm from the government and the "co-habiting" presidency.

The government called on Europe to join in a crusade to defend their film and television industries against "all-powerful" American interests. France's "victory" over Hollywood in the Gatt trade round was only a reprieve, said Alain Carignon, the Communications Minister.

The most ominous warning came in a book by Jacques Attali, the ousted head of the European Development Bank, who served for a decade as chief adviser to M. Mitterrand. France was threatened, he said, by a future in which America dictated all "the images" consumed by Europeans and in which the European Union dissolved eastwards into a "European Space" under German power. Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, had warned him. M. Attali said that he would be the last German leader who favoured European integration. The answer for France, he said, was the creation of a "continental union" uniting all

Europe in a confederation along Maastricht lines.

This idea is shared by M. Mitterrand who called, in Bulgaria on Wednesday, for just such a future entity. The Attali-Mitterrand scheme for a "continental architecture" would rest, of course, on a big element of central control, including programmes for grand projects and creating jobs. It would remain, in other words, a Delorsian place stretching from Vladivostok to Shannon, where ministers decided the contents of children's school bags.

Shooting of Somali ends Germany's aid mission

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

GERMAN soldiers yesterday broke a 50-year taboo by firing on and killing a foreigner. The incident, in the Belet Huen garrison in Somalia, triggered an anguished debate about the future role of the German army and criticism of Bonn's ambition to play a fuller part in the UN's peacekeeping operations.

Hans-Dieter Wichter, at the Defence Ministry, said that two Somalis broke into the German camp, apparently heading for the food store. Warning shots were fired and finally one intruder was killed. The other escaped.

The commander of the German garrison suspended participation in humanitarian missions in Somalia until the case is investigated by the UN and the Somali authorities. In effect, the German mission in Somalia has thus been terminated, since the Germans are due to withdraw anyway by the end of March and the investigation is likely to take weeks.

For any Western state with a fighting army — Britain, France or America, for example — the incident would probably have drawn regret and then been shrugged off. But Germany, inhibited by a constitution shaped in the immediate postwar years, shooting represents an important milestone. The German units were only allowed to serve under the UN banner in Somalia after long parliamentary argument. The 1,300-member garrison has a specifically humanitarian goal — the soldiers are mainly pioneers and engineers engaged on water supply projects — and the soldiers were given only light arms with orders to use them strictly for self-defence.

The fear in Bonn is that the killing might prompt a revenge attack by one or other of the Somali clans and draw Germany into an open firefight. The Germans would then be faced with a choice of a battle (fighting with inadequate arms) in violation of the constitution, or withdrawing the unit with humiliating haste. The latter course would be a setback for those members of the government who want to expand the army's legally permissible range of operations to enable it to take part in other UN missions, a vital step if Germany is to win a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

The vulnerability of the German army to the nerves and whims of politicians at home became all too clear last night when Konrad Weiss, for the Greens, demanded that the government should "immediately apologise to the relatives of the victim and to the whole of the Somali people".

NEWS IN BRIEF

Belgian minister resigns

Brussels: Guy Coeque, the Belgian Deputy Prime Minister, and two other leading Socialist politicians resigned yesterday over a bribery scandal that has shaken the centre-left coalition government.

Dubbed the "Three Guys" because they hold the same first name, they are all wanted for questioning over alleged bribes paid by the Italian firm Agusta to secure a helicopter contract in 1988.

Mr Coeque's francophone Socialist Party is at the centre of the scandal. Guy Spitaels, president of the regional Walloon government and former Socialist party chief, as well as one of his ministers, Guy Mathot, also resigned. All three strongly denied any wrongdoing.

Mr Coeque said of his resignation: "I do not want the government to suffer for this. I do not want my party to suffer." Political sources said the resignation would ease pressure on the coalition, which is an uneasy mix of Socialist and Christian Democrat parties. (Reuters)

Test tube ban

Paris: The French Senate has voted to ban test-tube fertilisation for women past child-bearing age or without a stable male partner and to forbid any tampering with embryos to manufacture "better" babies by genetic engineering. (Reuters)

Far-right raid

Potsdam: Police have broken up a distribution network for neo-Nazi propaganda and confiscated weapons, including bayonets and baseball bats, in raids across northern and eastern Germany, the Brandenburg state interior minister said. (Reuters)

Basque bomb

Pamplona: A Spanish policeman was slightly injured here when a bomb planted by Basque separatists exploded in a litter bin outside Banco NatWest, a Spanish subsidiary of the British National Westminster Bank, police said. (Reuters)

Marcos denial

Zurich: Freilager AG, a Swiss storage firm, has denied a report on Channel 4's *Dispatches* programme that it is holding 1,240 tonnes of gold, worth about £10 billion, accumulated by Ferdinand Marcos, the late Filipino President. (Reuters)

Soccer for jobs

Amsterdam: The Dutch Federation of Labour Unions is using the country's love of football to fight unemployment by offering World Cup tours to America for the best way of creating jobs. (AP)

Big rise in bank rate halts slide in Turkish currency

FROM ANDREW FINKEL IN ISTANBUL

ANKARA'S central bank, in an emergency move to stem a disastrous slide in the value of the Turkish lira, has raised its main lending rate to between 125 per cent and 180 per cent.

At one stage the lira lost nearly half its value, but the huge rise in the overnight rate, which had stood at between 70 per cent and 80 per cent, appears to have restored order. The country's currency markets remained calm yesterday in the wake of what the national press has dubbed "Black Wednesday".

Tansu Ciller, the Prime Minister, is calculating the cost to her own credibility after what some commentators are describing as three days of dithering while the value of the currency collapsed.

This week's financial crisis is just the sort of banana skin Mrs Ciller has been trying to avoid in the run-up to the nationwide local elections at the end of March, which are expected to give an accurate indication of the popularity of the two-party coalition that she leads.

Mrs Ciller is a former professor of economics and she will find it hard to escape responsibility for the run on the lira. She was principal Economics Minister for the two-and-a-half years before she became Prime Minister last June.

Earlier in the week Mrs Ciller had been defending her government which, she said, had ample foreign reserves. While the rest of Europe was in recession, the Turkish economy grew last year at a rate of 7.9 per cent.

With elections looming, Mrs Ciller has found it no easier than her predecessors to muster the political will to control runaway public spending. Her government has backed away from promises to cease funding loss-making state enterprises and to enact sweeping tax reforms. A high Turkish lira, which may have cut the cost of Turkey's borrowing requirements, has at the same time affected the trade balance badly.

Last week viewers of Turkey's new private television stations watched news footage of police using batons to disperse a peaceful, if technically illegal, protest in Ankara by civil servants who last year had to survive an inflation rate of over 70 per cent.

Cengiz Israil, a senior adviser to the late President Ozal, accused the government yesterday of having done lasting harm by failing to act for three days when the markets were calling for direction. "The markets will never forget," he said. "Whatever the government did on Thursday, it should have done on Monday."



Tansu Ciller, whose political credibility has been put in question in the run-up to nationwide local elections

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Boutros Ghali demands immediate release of Canadian troops besieged in Srebrenica

UN chief says he will not hesitate to order air strike

BY MICHAEL EVANS AND EVE-ANN PRENTICE

THE Bosnian Serbs were given a warning yesterday by Boutros Boutros Ghali, the United Nations Secretary-General, that they could face air strikes within days unless they allowed the rotation of UN troops in Srebrenica, in eastern Bosnia. About 200 Canadian UN troops have been waiting since before Christmas to be relieved by a Dutch unit, but have been prevented from doing so by Serb forces besieging the Muslim enclave.

After the call by the Nato summit leaders last week for tactical air cover to help the Canadians to leave Srebrenica safely, Dr Boutros Ghali said: "If it [the rotation] does not happen, then we will have to make the decision to use air power."

Speaking at a press conference in The Hague, he said he

was personally in favour of using air power, "but I have never received any request to use any air power." He would "give the green light" if asked, but he added that he had received information that the Serbs would allow the required rotation of the UN troops in Srebrenica.

On the wider front of peace negotiations, European Union governments have reaffirmed their unanimous support for Lord Owen in his attempts to find a solution to the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Their backing came after the European parliament called for Lord Owen's dismissal.

Yesterday the Greek government, which holds the presidency of the European Union, spoke on behalf of the 12 member governments with a firm declaration of support for Lord Owen's efforts.

Rejecting the European MPs' demand for a new peace envoy, British diplomatic sources said that none of the EU governments had any wish to replace him. "I don't think there is anyone who feels that if you change the messenger, you will make the message more palatable," one senior diplomat said.

Lord Owen was also defended yesterday by his fellow mediator, Thorvald Stoltenberg, the Norwegian politician appointed to the talks by the UN. He said Lord Owen was not responsible for the collapse of the three-way talks in Geneva. "Nobody has put in more effort or been more committed to finding peace in the former Yugoslavia over a longer period than Lord Owen. He cannot be criticised for the situation."

France also gave its full



A Sarajevo woman trudging through a cemetery after heavy snow covered the besieged Bosnian capital yesterday

support. "[Lord Owen] is acting with great perseverance in accordance with the directives of the EU," Richard Duguid, the French Foreign Ministry spokesman, said. "One should pay tribute to his action in search of a settlement."

Although there is increasing

frustration over the failure of the three warring parties to find a peace deal, European governments remain convinced that the only solution is to split Bosnia three ways. The European MPs, led by German parliamentarians, who voted to oust Lord Owen, had

stuck to a "moralistic but unrealistic" view that the sovereignty of Bosnia was sacrosanct. Their view was that Lord Owen represented a peace policy that was deeply flawed because it would lead to a division of Bosnia that was unfair to the Muslims

and rewarded the Serbs for "ethnic cleansing" atrocities. The British diplomat said: "We are not proud of the three-way split solution, but we feel that, however long it takes, that is the only viable option."

Russian vote, page 1

Hurd inspects gateway to war

FROM ANTHONY LOYD IN VITEZ

ROUTE Diamond, which winds through the mountainous snowscape between Tomislavgrad and Gornji Vakuf and is the main supply road for UN aid to the region, brought Douglas Hurd safely to Bosnia yesterday.

The Foreign Secretary arrived at "the redoubt", halfway along its length, this is home to the Royal Engineers, entrusted with maintaining the route. Set high in pine forests, it is the gateway to the war. "Beyond is the wild unknown," Major Alan Macklin, base commander, told Mr Hurd.

It was the "wild unknown" that Mr Hurd had come to assess in order to weigh the risks, costs and achievements of British troop efforts in Bosnia. "No conclusion has been made," declared Mr Hurd. "I shall leave with a series of vivid impressions."

UK exports to Malaysia leapt after dam deal

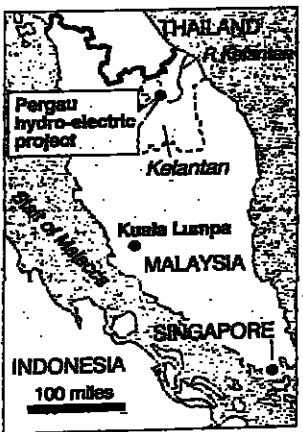
■ An informal "understanding" between Mrs Thatcher and Dr Mahathir in 1988 healed the rift of the Buy British Last campaign, according to Malaysian insiders

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN KUALA LUMPUR

PEOPLE close to the British side in a controversial hydroelectric dam project in Malaysia deny there was any formal deal with the Malaysian government secretly linking a large aid package with profitable arms contracts. But a leading Malaysian politician said there was almost certainly "an understanding."

"OK, Maggie, I will buy from the UK as long as you give me aid," was how the politician, who asked not to be identified, projected the direction of the conversation at a meeting in 1988 when Baroness Thatcher, then Prime Minister, persuaded Dr Mahathir Mohamed, Malaysia's Prime Minister, to end his "Buy British Last" campaign. She apparently succeeded, for British exports to Malaysia were up in the first ten months of 1993 to £780 million from £637 million the previous year.

One person close to the



British side in the controversy over the Pergau River dam in the economically backward state of Kelantan, conceded: "If the overall relationship had not improved, it is questionable whether we would have been able to make as much in defence sales as we have."

A Malaysian close to the centre of power in this booming capital said: "There would have been an understanding, but if you look for evidence you will never get it. Nothing would have been written down. These kind of things work on trust and confidence. It was a business proposition. Jobs were created and earnings went to the UK."

The project has forced the relocation of some aboriginal people from their ancestral land, attracting criticism from

environmental groups in Britain. But here criticism from "greens" has been mild. They do not expect the impact on wildlife to be great, and say most species should be able to adapt.

Gurmit Singh, president of the Environment Protection Society of Malaysia, said yesterday: "We have some doubts, although we have not yet done a real evaluation of the Pergau River site. But overall it does not look too terrible."

Asked if there were likely to have been kickbacks or other corruption involved, one Malaysian insider said: "There might have been 'some slicing off here and there'." On the question whether the £234 million dam, which is to provide power at peak periods only, was in a worthwhile economic proposition, he said: "If Malaysians were as stupid as to go for something that did not make economic sense, they could never have built up the country the way they have. After all, even if there is some corruption, you still have to justify it as a project."

He added that to abandon the project now, when it is about 60 per cent complete, and switch to a natural gas-powered station, which is what Malaysia is now building elsewhere, would make no sense.

Critics say that the British and Malaysian companies involved would make tidy profits. Supporters of the project say this is bound to be the case, and that although Malaysia is switching to gas for power, it wishes to diversify its energy sources.

One British source said in defence of the dam: "Some forest is inevitably affected in this kind of project, but the Pergau dam is a wonderful engineering achievement. The British should be taking pride in it, not being deflected by other issues."

Malaysia this week took delivery of the first of 28 British-made Hawk 100 jet trainers as part of an overall £1.3 billion arms package.

Whatever is being said in Britain, Mrs Thatcher is still being quietly congratulated by senior Malaysians on the sound advice she obviously received - friends of Denis Thatcher are mentioned - on how to operate in an Asian business environment.



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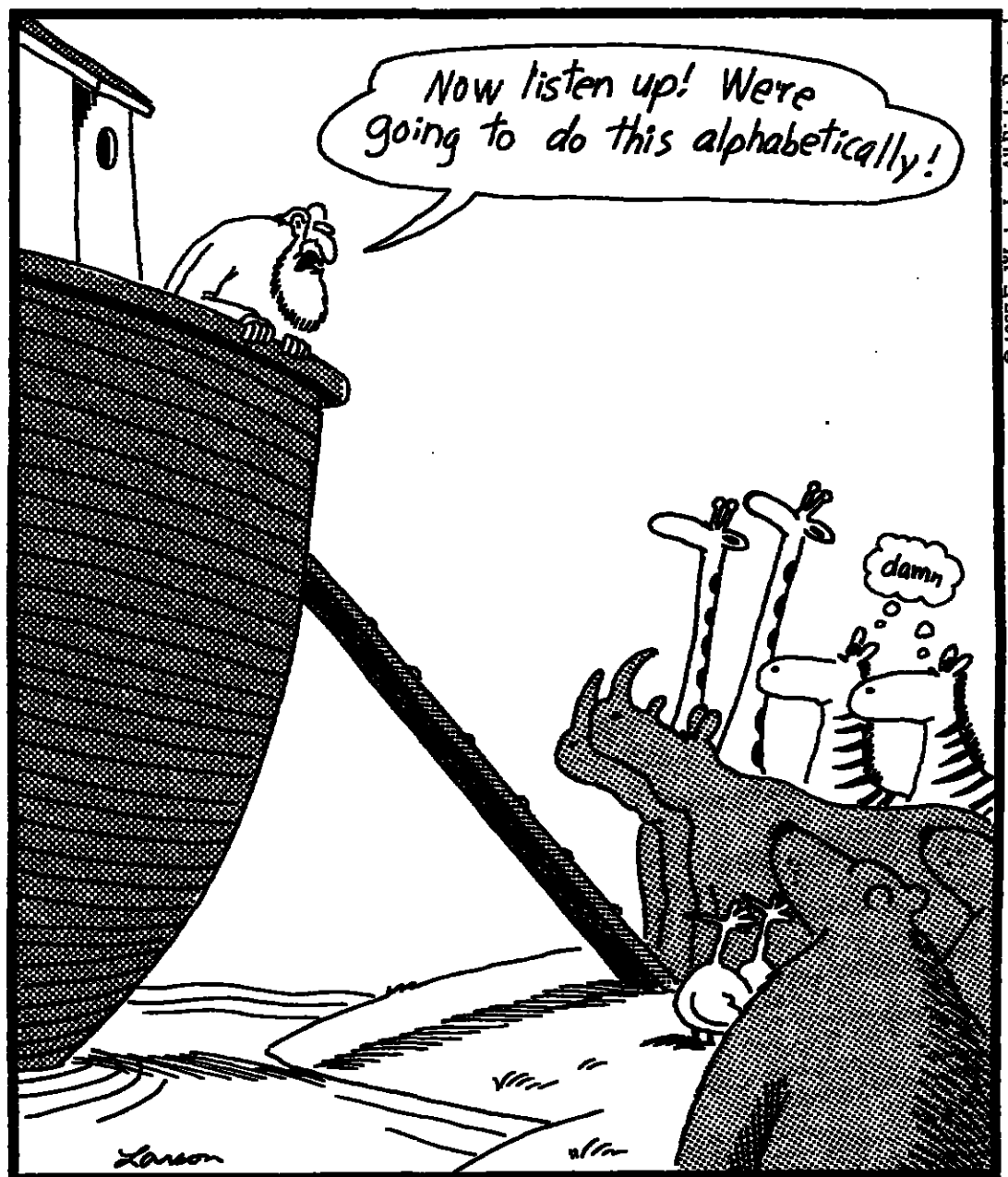
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Hosokawa dithers at crossroads as reforms hit barrier



Hosokawa: started crusade to clean up political system

FROM JOANNA PITMAN
IN TOKYO

THE future of the fragile seven-party coalition government of Morihiro Hosokawa, the Japanese Prime Minister, was thrown into doubt last night when the upper house of the Diet rejected a clutch of government-sponsored political reform Bills, exposing the internal rifts in the coalition and raising the possibility of a snap general election and a realignment of political groups.

The Bills, designed to clean up Japan's corruption-prone political system, were defeated by 130 to 118 votes after 20 members of the Democratic Socialist Party, the biggest core party in the coalition, rebelled against their coalition colleagues, outnumbering the handful of opposition Liberal Democratic Party members who had crossed party lines to support the coalition. The package had been passed in the lower house in November.

■ The anti-corruption drive that took Morihiro Hosokawa to power has suffered a shattering blow in parliament. With his coalition riven, he has just a few days to make a deal with the opposition

A long-faced Mr Hosokawa appeared before television cameras late last night, denying speculation about his resignation but admitting that he had no clear idea about what to do next. "I truly regret that the Bills were rejected. I wish to try to push the Bills through in some form before the end of the current Diet session. The success of these Bills is the most important mission of my premiership," he said, adding "I don't know what we are going to do with the LDP. As things turned out there is a strong chance that we will have to make a compromise with the LDP."

Confusion reigned in the Diet as politicians and analysts struggled to come to some agreement on the ramifications of the vote's rejection. Mr Hosokawa appears to have three options. First, within the extended Diet session that ends on January 29, he can rush together a joint upper and lower house committee to find a compromise package that would be acceptable to both parliamentary houses. This would suggest a decision to accept, at least in part, the opposition LDP's favoured diluted version of the Bills — a move which would probably jeopardise the public support that Mr Hosokawa has successfully built up, having created an image for himself as a crusader fighting the pervasive corruption that has marked Japan's LDP-dominated politics. Secondly, he can send the Bills back to the lower house and attempt to push them through with a two-thirds majority, as required in the constitution to make them law.

There is almost no chance of winning such a large majority, but this move would embarrass the Liberal Democrats by exposing their 40 or so lower house reform-minded deserters and would increase the chances of another devastating split in the leading opposition party, which lost power last July after 55 rebels left the party over its failure to push through related political reform Bills.

The third option open to Mr Hosokawa is to dissolve the Cabinet and call a snap election under the present electoral rules, although he said last night that he had no plans to do so immediately.

Yuichi Ichikawa, secretary-general of Komeito, one of the constituent governing coalition parties, reacted to the vote with a statement implying that the coalition would favour the first option of falling in

with the LDP's wishes on a diluted version of the Bills. Mr Ichikawa is a close friend and ally of Ichiro Ozawa, the former LDP headman who triggered the party's downfall last July when he led a revolt by dissident members to form a new political party. Mr Ozawa is believed to be the real power behind Mr Hosokawa's coalition government.

The reform Bills which have caused such trouble to at least three successive administrations and directly precipitated the departures of Toshiki Kaifu and Kiichi Miyazawa, the last two Liberal Democrat Prime Ministers, are broadly designed to end corruption. One Bill completely redesigns the mechanism for electing members of the more powerful lower house. Members are now elected from multi-member constituencies. With several seats at stake, a single party often runs several rival candidates in a single constituency and, as a result, elections turn more on personality and "gifts" to the voters

than on policy differences. Under Mr Hosokawa's proposal, 274 constituencies would become single-seat ones and a further 226 seats would be chosen by proportional representation. The LDP wants to see 280 single-seat constituencies and 230 seats elected by PR, creating a lower house of 510 seats, almost the same size as the present 511-seat chamber. The party's motivation is to neutralise possible opposition from those politicians who fear losing their seats in the smaller 500-seat chamber planned by the coalition.

At this stage it is unclear whether the long term holds the prospect of a resurgence of the Liberal Democrats, who until last July had held power for 38 uninterrupted years. What is certain, however, is that Lloyd Bentsen, the American Treasury Secretary, scheduled to meet Mr Hosokawa tomorrow to prepare the ground for the US-Japan Washington summit on February 11, will be very lucky if he gets any answers at all.

Death of Assad son in crash revives worries over succession

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

BASSEL Assad, the eldest and apparently the favourite son of President Assad of Syria, was killed in a car crash yesterday. He was 33. He will be buried today after noon prayers in the family's hometown of Qardahah, in the northwest of the country.

His death immediately fuelled speculation about the succession in Syria, a key player in the Middle East peace process, where President Assad's strong and uncompromising political stand has been one of the few constants in the volatile region. The Syrian leader is in poor but apparently stable health, being known to suffer from a heart complaint and possibly diabetes, and a form of leukaemia.

Bassel, a Syrian air force major and the head of the presidential security apparatus, was considered a possible successor, although he would have been constitutionally forbidden to assume power until he was 40. Syrian sources said Bassel, a skilled showjumping horseman who also enjoyed fast cars, was driving to Damascus airport to catch a flight to Germany, when he crashed in foggy weather.

"Bassel always stayed in the background and never showed any real political leadership," a political analyst said. "It's more likely to be a family tragedy than a political one."

Constitutionally President Assad, 63, should be replaced by Abdel-Halim Khaddam, the Vice-President, but the succession has never been defined. The only certainty is that President Assad

wants to preserve the influence of his Alawite Islamic minority, which has monopolised power in Syria for more than 20 years.

Three years ago the Syrian media began referring to President Assad as Abu (father of) Bassel, after his eldest of four sons. It was seen as a sure sign that Bassel was being groomed as successor.

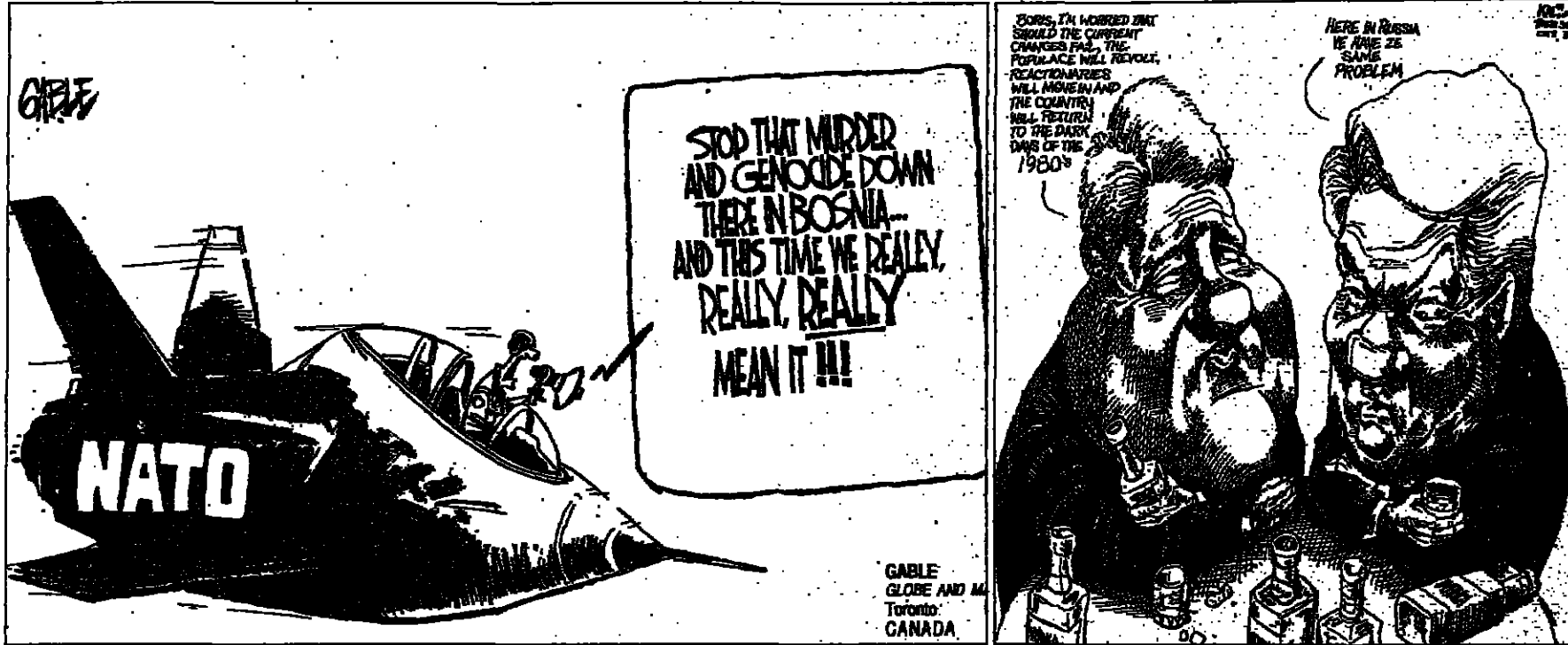
Some believed his father was grooming him only to deflect speculation about other possible successors and to prevent the unseemly scenes that followed news of the President's heart attack in 1983. While he was recuperating in hospital, his younger brother, Rifaat, made an abortive attempt to seize power.

Rifaat was exiled to Spain, but was allowed to return in the summer of 1992 for the funeral of his mother. He has stayed on, looms in the background, although he has been kept out of the limelight.

Jerusalem: Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation are hoping to break the deadlock in their peace negotiations today when Yasser Arafat, the PLO leader, and Shimon Peres, the Israeli Foreign Minister, meet in Oslo for the funeral of Johan Jorgen Holst, the Norwegian minister who mediated their accord (Richard Beeston writes).

"I hope the differences will be ironed out when Peres sees Arafat," said Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli Prime Minister, who has reportedly approved a fresh offer to be put to the PLO.

THE WORLD IN CARTOONS



Clockwise from top left: empty words on Bosnia, as seen by Gable of the Toronto Globe and Mail; Mr Clinton and Mr Yeltsin sharing woes at their summit, by Kal in the Baltimore Sun; procreation in the 1990s, by Gable; and the Los Angeles earthquake as seen by Signe in the Philadelphia Daily News

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Drum majorette breaks into the all-male Citadel

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

A former high-school drum majorette who was admitted to an all-male military college after deleting any reference to her sex on her application form has won the right to start attending classes after a legal battle that went all the way to the Supreme Court.

Shannon Faulkner broke a 151-year tradition of male exclusivity when she entered a biology class on Thursday at the Citadel military academy, a tiered stone campus in Charleston, South Carolina. "I did have butterflies in my stomach," she said. "I was just a little nervous because it's unlike anything I've ever done. It wasn't like walking into any other class, when there are 30 guys in the class and you're the only woman."

Miss Faulkner applied to the Citadel, famed for its tough military discipline, after being asked by a high-school teacher to study a magazine article on the initiation rights of the cadets at the college.

A popular pupil in a small, conservative town in South Carolina with only two traffic lights, she completed the Citadel's application form using her mother's masculine-sounding maiden name, Richey, as her middle name. A careers officer then deleted all mention of her sex, whiting out an "F" for "female" on the form as well as the word "girls" in a reference to her high-school sports record. The only clue that she was a woman was that she had played high-school soft-

ball for six years — which, in South Carolina, only girls do. Obviously satisfied by her school record, which included a stint as editor of the class year-book and a place in the school's "Hall of Fame", the Citadel accepted Miss Faulkner. But when it learnt she was a woman, it immediately rescinded its decision.

Miss Faulkner sued, contending that the all-male policy was unconstitutional because the college was supported by state funds. A lower court judge ruled that she should be allowed to attend classes with the 2,000 male students, but said that she could not live on campus, eat in the cafeteria or join the college's cadet corps.

The college appealed to the Supreme Court, arguing that it was entitled to offer all-male education, and won a temporary injunction from the US Chief Justice to prevent her from attending classes. However, the judge lifted the order this week to enable her to study at the college while the litigation continues.

Miss Faulkner's first day of classes coincided with her nineteenth birthday. Despite repeated threats against her and vandalism of her home and car, she declared herself content with her opening lecture on plant reproduction. "My first day of class went well," she said. One cadet "asked me how things were going and he wanted to let me know that not everyone here was against me."

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JOB CENTRE

Managing the national soccer team is a thankless task, says Peter Barnard, but Terry Venables covets it despite the knocks

Best man for England's worst job

Among all the claims and counter-claims made about Terry Venables, we are yet to be treated to the revelation that he is a masochist. But it must be so, for is not Mr Venables the man who dearly wants to manage the England football team, and is not masochism defined as "a person deriving pleasure from his own pain or humiliation"?

Yes he is, and yes it is. Even more extraordinary, Mr Venables is willing to take the rewards of his ambition, that is to say pain and humiliation, up front. In advance of the job itself. Mr Venables has yet to kick-off, but he is already taking a beating.

The managership of the football team which exemplifies, heaven help us, "England's national game" is coveted by thousands, achieved by a few and grants permanent glory to none. Even the job's only knights, Alf Ramsey and Walter Winterbottom, eventually departed

to calls for their heads. Indeed Sir Alf appears to have put the experience so far to the back of his mind that in his *Who's Who* entry he omits to remind us that England's sole World Cup victory, in 1966, was achieved under his tutelage.

As a Channel 4 documentary on Monday night will show, managing England is nought but a bed of nails. The last manager, Graham Taylor, arrived as a saviour and slunk from the arena nailed to a cross of fire, his head turned into a turnip on tabloid front pages.

So why bother? Mr Venables has no further need of glory, having played for England with distinction and managed two English clubs to important trophies as well as coaching Barcelona to the Spanish championship. There are those

who think that Mr Venables needs the money. His company, Edenmore, is not in the best of health and he is still faced with a £430,000 bill for costs after his unsuccessful High Court attempt to gain reinstatement as chief executive of Tottenham Hotspur.

But Mr Venables is a splendid television performer, and he is not short of lucrative offers to write for newspapers. If further cash were needed, and the way to acquire it was either by managing England or by managing the bridge at Charing Cross, most of us would at least want time to think it over.

The thinking time would be lengthened by the prospect of working for the Football Association, Mr Venables's putative employers. This bizarre outfit operates from

the splendour of a building in Lancaster Gate, an elegant edifice seemingly soundproofed against the incursions of the real world.

In 1992, the FA swiped the cream off the Football League's milk, the First Division, and renamed it the Premier League and laudably the ghastly Premiership. The idea was that the FA would streamline top football, in particular by reducing the number of clubs in the highest stratum. This would have the important side-effect of helping England by reducing the club pressure on international players.

So far, not much. The Premiership still consists of 22 clubs and England... well England are looking for a manager. In Mr Venables we thought they had found one. Last Sunday Sir Bert Millichip, the

70-year-old chairman of the FA, said that Mr Venables was the man for the job. Now he appears to be saying that he may not be, on account of the financial irregularities in which Mr Venables is alleged to have been involved.

At each change of Sir Bert's mind, the hapless FA secretary, Mr Graham Kelly, is despatched to tell the public that everything will be hunky-dory... but not yet. There was to have been an announcement today, but now Mr Kelly — a man distressingly far down the waiting-list for a charisma transplant — tells us it will be next week. Possibly.

The FA has one real problem, which is that if Tottenham Hotspur succeeded in an attempt to have Edenmore wound up because of the

£430,000 owed by Mr Venables, it might be difficult for Mr Venables to represent the FA, which is a limited company. However, some lawyers regard this argument as fallacious: Mr Venables is being asked to coach a football team, not run a company.

If this rudderless, leaderless ship called football resembles any other creaking coaster, then it is the ship of state under Captain John Major. Where Mr Major has a rebellious Cabinet, Sir Bert has a rebellious FA committee. For U-turns, fudge and mudge in No 10, read vacillation, indecision and hypocrisy in Lancaster Gate. No wonder the obituaries for Sir Matt Busby speak yearningly of his leadership qualities.

Hypocrisy is football's oldest

disease, on and off the field. In the present case we are asked to believe that the real stumbling-block to the appointment of Mr Venables is the allegation that he may have been involved at Spurs in illegal payments, specifically paying money to players' agents. FA rules forbid this, although why is anyone's guess. Agents are a fact of football life and managers deal with them as best they can. "Bungs" are part of the game, and if that is not exactly morally upright, then the FA, which takes its main sponsorship cash from a larger company, is not best placed to judge.

The likelihood is that Mr Venables will be appointed manager of England next week after certain matters have been swept under the carpet. It will not have been an auspicious start, but at least England will have the best man for the job. Or the best man for the job since Mr Graham Taylor, the last best man for the job.

Ben Macintyre says the nobbling of a ladies skating champion has shattered another sporting illusion

Don't put your daughter on the ice, Mrs W

A remarkable new technique has been added to the repertoire of women's figure skating. Forget the triple axel spin, the elegant swivels and lady-like leaps, the new move is more straightforward than these and, when properly executed, devastatingly effective: simply obtain a black retractable aluminium police baton and arrange to have your opponent's leg broken with it.

This, as every skating enthusiast is now painfully aware, is what allegedly happened to Nancy Kerrigan, America's best hope for a figure-skating gold medal at next month's Winter Olympics, who was attacked using the new baton method while training for the US National Championships two weeks ago.

Four men have been charged with conspiring to nobble Kerrigan, including the ex-husband of her US rival, Tonya Harding, who went on to win the National Championships in Kerrigan's absence. Two of the accused claim Harding knew of and participated in the plot, a charge she denies.

The assailant failed to break Kerrigan's leg, but he did succeed, with a single blow, in shattering the hitherto pristine image of women's figure skating.

Sport in America long ago ceased to be an issue of athletic excellence. It now more closely resembles one of those vast, hugely lucrative New Age religions, peddling a cult of celebrity with carefully scheduled advertising breaks, and attracting a familiar assembly of crooks and kooks.

When Kerrigan sat on the ice crying "why me?", the answer at first seemed obvious: she was, we assumed, the victim of a de-ranged fan. After the death of John Lennon and the attack on tennis star Monica Seles, such people are expected to lurk on the fringes of fame.

But the Kerrigan incident turned out to be weird even by modern showbiz/sporting standards, a saga combining elements of *Snow White* with *The Godfather* and *Laurel and Hardy*, which may explain why Kerrigan's agent had received 25 offers for the film rights within three days of the attack.

The cast of characters alone is enough to make every prime time television producer drool:

- Nancy Kerrigan herself, a willowy 24-year-old naïf with perfect teeth, runs a charity for the blind and says there is not enough malice in her heart to understand why anyone would want to kneecap her. Ronald Reagan writes fan letters to her.

- Tonya Harding, a stumpy irascible gnome with a taste for pool halls and cigarettes who learned to shoot before she could read and who remarks generously of her rival: "I'm going to whip her butt."

- Jeff Gillooly, the rat-like fellow at the centre of the alleged conspiracy who has been married to, divorced from, reunited with and is now finally separated from Harding. "I have more faith in my wife than to bump off her competitors," he says.

- Shawn Eckardt, a 25-stone fantasist composed almost entirely of neck, who allegedly hired the hitmen and then boasted of the feat to everyone he met, including a born-again Christian minister. He claims to have worked for the CIA rescuing hostages in the Middle East and to have taught at "the College level", according to his CV. Even his lawyer admits Eckardt is one brick short of a full hod.

The accused men are all in the rugged-survivalist, wannabee Sch-

warzenegger mould, a peculiar American species bred by watching too many action films and excessive time spent in gymnasiums. Watching the refined and crystalline atmosphere of figure skating collide with this world of bogus "shadows and trenchcoats" (as one witness described it) is a rare treat for those not involved.

The minister who first told police of the plot described hearing a taped exchange allegedly between Gillooly and Eckardt, which would have done John Gotti proud.

"Why don't we just kill her?" said the man identified as Gillooly.

"We don't need to kill her," came Eckardt's alleged response. "Let's just hit her in the knee."

Mr Eckardt then apparently wandered around Portland, Oregon, asking friends and acquaintances "Would you break someone's legs for \$65,000?"

Contrast this sort of language with Kerrigan's saccharine philosophy — "the most important thing is to be happy and healthy" — and you have the makings of a prime-time weepy that could last a whole mini-series.

Since sport is seen as a branch of moral philosophy here, the entire bizarre affair has been embraced by pundits as a cautionary tale. Kerrigan and Harding have similar working-class backgrounds, yet Kerrigan is portrayed as a heroine who beat

the odds, while Harding is seen as a brat who reportedly threatened to beat a woman motorist with a baseball bat and has been forever consigned to the White Trash heap.

But the incident is not really about poor-girls-made-good, or bad, nor the dangers of overheated competition on cold surfaces. It is about money. Whoever carries off the figure-skating gold medal can look forward to earning some \$10 million as a result. As one of *People* magazine's "50 most beautiful people", Kerrigan has already picked up valuable contracts advertising sports shoes and Campbell's soup.

Since the attack elevated her to a cross between Mother Teresa and Cinderella, she can look forward to many more such sponsorship deals, even if she loses. Tonya Harding, by contrast, will be lucky to pick up an endorsement for waste disposal units after this. Harding has always worn her mercenary inclinations on her sequined sleeve. When asked about her feelings after winning the National Championship, she observed: "To be perfectly honest, what I'm really thinking are dollar signs."

The FBI and police say the four accused men were also motivated by dollar signs, hoping to cash in on Harding's fame and wealth by easing her path to the gold medal.

Wherever intense competition, celebrity-type and vast profits converge, low-life nasties naturally congregate, and the Olympic Games are no exception. Yet figure skating seemed always to hold itself aloof from the money grabbing and corruption. With its old-fashioned emphasis on demure femininity and those unspeakable outfits (henceforth, presumably, to be fashioned out of bullet-proof body-armor), figure skating seemed a throwback to an earlier sporting era. But thanks to the tawdry Harding-Kerrigan affair, the sport of ladies has come a most unseemly cropper in full view of the spectators.

Behind the rictus smiles, the tears and the talent, it is a slippery world out there on the rink after all. Don't put your daughter on the ice, Mrs Worthington.

The blow, when it came, was crude. For almost two episodes the BBC had kept faith. *Middlemarch*, glory of English fiction, was more than respected, it was enhanced. Here once again was a serial to make us rush home. Literary integrity had remained television drama. Then, suddenly, wham!

The moment was that of Lydgate's proposal to his beloved Rosamund Vincy. The ambitious young doctor has been privately warned away from her by her relatives: she is mortified at his neglect of her. They meet half by chance. Tears well up in Rosamund's "Forget-me-not eyes" and Lydgate's resolve crumbles. To George Eliot, the tears were the "crystallising feather-touch" that "shook flirtation into love". Lydgate takes the girl in his arms, gently as if she were a patient, and kisses each large tear. She is not angry, writes Eliot, "but she moved backwards a little in timid happiness and Lydgate could now sit near her and speak more completely". In half an hour they are engaged. The encounter is of supreme tenderness. The vulnerability of young love was never so exquisitely portrayed.

The BBC thinks Eliot made a total hash of this scene. It believes that what should have happened was this. Lydgate charges across the room at the sight of Rosamund's tears. To swelling background music she sobs. "I'm so unhappy if you do not care about me." He seizes her in his arms and they subject each other to immediate jaw-crushing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. *Middlemarch* gets a sudden dose of *Neighbours*.

As I reeled from the shock, I began to tick off other liberties that this episode had taken with Eliot's novel. No, Dorothea was not physically rejected one night by her husband, Casaubon. The enigma of their relationship is that Eliot never tells us on what rock it foundered. No, Mary Garth does not give all her savings to the spendthrift Fred Vincy, whom she loves. She gives the money to her father, whom she also loves. (Caleb Garth was based on Eliot's own father.) This divided affection is crucial to her character. No, the artist whom Dorothea encounters in Rome does not draw her surreptitiously. He draws her with Casaubon's full permission.

What is the point of such changes? Who dictates this censorship? I respect Andrew Davies's excellent screenplay. I must assume that some BBC sex-and-ratings executive decided that some scenes lacked a bit of you-know-what: "Hey Davies, get hold of that guy Eliot and tell him to jazz up the love scenes!" In which case, why not write a period romance set in provincial England and leave Eliot out of it? I imagine the directors of the National Gallery could adjust their Titans and Goyas to modern taste. The RSC could beef up some of Shakespeare's weaker lines. But they do not. They respect the original. By what licence do we tamper with a novel?

I ask this question only because this *Middlemarch* is otherwise superb. It is as good as the BBC's *In fair Hackney*, there we lay our scene. Our cast: a pair of wire-crossed lovers. A walled back garden beneath a balcony. As our story begins, a young man is clambering over the wall. He freezes at the sudden sound of glass shattering somewhere out of view. Romeo: But soft, what brick through yonder window break? 'Tis in the East End, methinks — must be Potpan and the lads down at the Rising Sun practising for the revolution. Wish I was down there. I could murder a meat — not to mention any passing members of the bourgeoisie. But better get this over with first.

He reaches the top of the wall and drops into the garden, sending cats and dustbins flying. As he brushes himself down, a young girl appears on the balcony. She seems oblivious to the confusion below, not to mention the deafening sound of Pump Up a Montague blasting from next door's sound system. Cousin "Ice" Tybalt is clearly at home.

Juliet: O Romeo, Romeo. Wherefore art thou Romeo? Deny thy father and refuse thy name. Or else be but sworn my love... Romeo (aside): Shall I hear more, or shall I tell her now about the Child Support Agency. Honestly — I could no more deny my father, than I could my sexual preference. I mean only the other day I was hearing some story about officials coming all the way from Bohemia to collar this geezer who'd abandoned his baby daughter. Deny my father? Not a hope.

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The BBC is bringing George Eliot's provincial scenes to glorious life — but changing tenderness to titillation



George Eliot would immediately have recognised her characters in the excellent BBC cast

Henry James series, as good as *The Pallisers*, better even than *Barchester*. Normally such television dramatisations are crude novels merely plundered for plots and characters by a medium often too lazy to create its own. Authors are stripped of their imaginative range. Heroes are fitted into stereotypes. The result is an illustration that rarely illuminates the original, as in the case of the recent travesty of *Stendhal's Scarlet and Black*.

Not so *Middlemarch*. This serial is all but perfect. On seeing Robert Hardy's Mr Brooke, George Eliot would have banged her hand on the table and cried "That's him!" The BBC's castings of Vincy, Bulstrode, Lydgate and Casaubon will from now on be welcome guests at my *Middlemarch* table. I have seldom seen such care taken with accents as the indicators of class. The backgrounds are equally fault-

less, the gossiping women, the scheming governors of the hospital, the raucous market traders. Some have criticised the ubiquity of horses, but 19th-century England was dominated by horses. The architecture is wrong: *Middlemarch* was mercantile Warwickshire brick, not Cornish stone. But the balance between people and place is controlled. Eliot's narrative energy is never dissipated. The women are less surefooted,

perhaps because Eliot was herself ambivalent towards them. One moment she is Dorothea, Mary Garth, even Rosamund, the next she is an aloof commentator, mother superior to a turbulent convent. On the surface, Dorothea is a prim heroine, a goody-two-shoes borrowed from Dickens to resolve the plot and release its victims with dollops of inherited wealth. But her appeal to the modern reader lies with her inner doubts and agonies. Eliot's pages of psychological analysis cannot be transmitted in the fleeting expressions of an actress, even one as well-cast as Juliet Aubrey. Perhaps a camera can never equal the written word in emotional complexity. (I noticed that Merchant Ivory could not fully capture the subtlety in the excellent *Remains of the Day*.) Dorothea remains the creature of a literary

imagination. Nor does the BBC help by portraying her scholarly husband Casaubon as an Addams Family ghoul. He is more interesting than this, and was based in part on Eliot's view of herself.

Middlemarch is England's *War and Peace*. Both novels were written at the end of the 1850s and recalled upheavals of a generation before. Both Eliot and Tolstoy used the clash of human personalities as metaphor for a clash of ideologies. Both set the land — its seasons, its owners, its workers and their ways — in timeless contrast to history rushing past its gates.

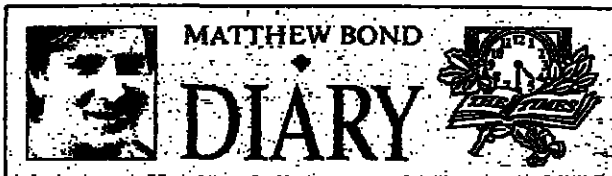
Tolstoy's history was grander: the Petersburg court and the advance and retreat of Napoleon's armies across Europe. Eliot's history was more pedestrian, more microscopic: the impact of political and medical reform on a small Midlands town. She studied the clash of town and country, of merchant and landowner, of radical and conservative. Amid the petty-minded jealousies and rumours, Eliot emerges superficially on the side of the conservatives. The country and inherited wealth triumph. Interlopers find themselves on the wrong side of her pen. She rewards honest, unambitious labour, and well-matched couples. *Middlemarch* cannot sustain unconventional affections. They must go into exile.

But that is only the half of it. *Middlemarch* was written in London by a woman whose life was scorned by her friends at home. She seemed to loathe the priggish hypocrisy of small-town Liberals even more than the marital conventions of county families. Mr Brooke is rendered absurd when he stands for Parliament as a radical. But he is local gentry and survives. Lydgate, the enlightened newcomer, is tainted and ruined by *Middlemarch*: "Confound their petty politics," he cries in despair. The villain of the piece is Bulstrode, a banker and philanthropist of the sort that was the backbone of provincial English towns. He too is an interloper who must be destroyed. In *Middlemarch* it seems only inherited wealth is secure and unsullied.

I know all this is no more than a backdrop to the minute examination of a woman's heart. Jane Austen's heroines conformed, Eliot's defied conformity. Hence *Middlemarch*'s reputation for radicalism. But the book's coded abuse of provincial England cast a long shadow forward. The English novel has ever since loved London, adored the country but scorned provincial towns. From Dickens and Trollope to Amis, Bradbury and Lodge, no self-respecting hero is seen dead outside London except in a country house or a university. *Middlemarch* may have freed the feminine soul, but it placed provincial England in lasting bondage.

Television can still bring great works to life and profound themes to mind. This serial is reintroducing me to old friends, and letting me worry anew over their agonies. Here's to them all. But please let George Eliot, not the BBC, be arbiter of how they conduct their lives.

A Montague comes out



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Juliet: Your friend and kinsman? Romeo: The very same — although Benvolio is only a distant coz I might add. Well, the thing is, we've all been spending a lot of time together and...

Juliet: Yes, my love? Romeo: Oh dear, how can I put it. You remember all that thumping stuff?

Juliet: You mean that silly boys' stuff about biting your thumb, but not biting your thumb? I never did understand what all that was about. What of it?

Long pause. Romeo: Well, Juliet, it's got a bit more serious. Even longer pause. Juliet: You mean the love that dare

not speak its name? Romeo: I will once Oscar Wilde gets round to it. Juliet (fictly): And are you friends, your kissing cousins, similarly inclined?

Romeo: Well that's a difficult one. Most of the gay pressure groups are saying one in ten, but there is some worrying new government research suggesting it might be only one in 90. Three out of three might be a bit of a long shot. Still I'll take my chance.

Juliet: Oh my love, I beseech thee, think on't. What of the law? Surely the Prince hath forbid such things between those of such tender years?

Romeo: Have you not heard of the splendid work of Princess Edwina? As soon as she can rest from penning her licentious literature, she plans to introduce the most liberal of reforms. But anyway you're a fine one to speak about the age of consent. You're not 14 yet.

Juliet: Am too — or I will be in a fortnight's time, come Lammas Eve. What's more I heard a friend of daddy's telling him that lots of girls my age make happy mothers. And mummy thinks so too.

Romeo: Yes, the council block over the road is full of mothers your age. Or it was until Sir George Young chucked them out on the streets. Go and see how happy they are now. Juliet, listen to your father. For despite being a Capulet, he talks traditional values. His dancing days may be over, but he doesn't think yours should start for another two years. So keep your balcony doors shut, your hand on your ducat, and make Paris wait. He'll love you all the more.

Anyway, must dash. Mercutio and I are going dancing down at the Sweet Prince. Good night. Thanks for being so understanding. I feel so much happier now I've told you.

And with that he is gone, leaving Juliet alone with her thoughts. Juliet: Mercutio! I hate them. (She turns) And turn that awful row down, Tybalt, before I come and run you through.

Curtain. To thunderous, politically correct applause.



COLD COMFORT KREMLIN

Russia dare not dream of escape from the laws of economics

Boris Yeltsin once confessed to an interviewer that all his life, he had alternated between lethargic indecision and bursts of activity; you had, he said, to keep prodding him with a sharp knitting needle. Is it lethargy that has led him to jettison almost all of the few men properly equipped as democrats or economic reformers? Or is it fear of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's appeal to ultra-nationalism and the strong showing of communist diehards in December's elections? Either way, it is now becoming clear that his new government gives dangerous new strength to the old guard.

From the ranks of those firmly in the camp of modernising Russia, there remains only the privatisation minister, Anatoli Chubais. Equally worryingly, there has been no Kremlin disavowal of the foreign minister's alarming hints at a military *droit de regard* over countries in Russia's "sphere of influence". The government to emerge from days of secretive negotiations in the Kremlin is dominated as never before by Viktor Chernomyrdin. A former industrial boss in the communist mould who scorned to run for election, his attitude to economic reforms varies between hesitance and nonsense.

Accepting the resignation of Yegor Gaidar this week, Mr Yeltsin promised that reform would continue, but spoke in the same breath of "Russian national and strategic interests". His new watchwords are "national unity and renewal". Interpretation is still required; but the outlook is for neither.

Mr Chernomyrdin has declared the days of "market romanticism" over, when in truth they were only just beginning to dawn. He has promised to continue the fight against inflation; but proposes in the same breath a loosening of monetary controls, saying that inflation can be fought by non-monetary methods. At best, these will prolong the pain of economic reforms; at worst, they could take Russia several steps back towards a command economy. Hyper-inflation lies down that road and with it, the instability that will benefit only Mr Zhirinovskiy.

Belatedly alarmed by the real risk of hyper-inflation, Mr Clinton has chosen to take comfort in Mr Yeltsin's "strong grip on power". But this will be cold comfort indeed

if Russia's increasingly unpredictable president responds to the resurgence of outright reactionaries by backing populist policies, whether at home or abroad.

Mr Yeltsin seems to be banking on Mr Chernomyrdin to buy off the outright reactionaries massed in the new Russian Parliament. No economist himself, he may even believe that the best way to do so is to return to policies — such as generous state subsidies to failing industries, protectionism and price controls — against which Mr Gaidar and the departed finance minister, Boris Fyodorov, pitted themselves through 1993. Just when inflation and budget deficits were coming within sight of containment, production was beginning to stabilise and Russia was chalking up a respectable trade surplus, their gains for stability are in question again.

In a line-up of men described by *Investia* as "apparatchiks who know only how to administer and issue credits", the most depressing figure is Viktor Geraschenko. The decision to re-appoint him as head of the Russian central bank beggars belief. Of all the reformers' difficulties over the past two years, the struggle to stop Mr Geraschenko from debauching the currency by printing money was the toughest. Even after Mr Yeltsin staked all last April in a referendum on economic reform, and won, Mr Geraschenko again created chaos last July when he abruptly invalidated all pre-1993 rouble notes. Airtily dismissing "all this stuff about micros and macros", Mr Geraschenko seems to revel in his ignorance of market economics. He is on record as opposing tight monetary policies because they mean that "workers don't get paid enough".

The best hope for Russia is that market forces are by now strong enough to survive state meddling. Both Mr Yeltsin and Mr Chernomyrdin have shown pragmatism in the past; the West's interest lies in persuading them, before the currency collapses, that not even Russia is immune to the laws of economics. There can be no question of pouring money into unworkable policies, but persuasion must be backed by a more convincing plan to come to the rescue of virtue than the West has so far produced.

VIOLENCE IN THE HOME

Video sadism needs to be controlled

What was once only vague unease about violent videos has become wide public alarm. An amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill being put forward by the Liberal Democrat MP, David Alton, gives expression to that concern. It has attracted all-party support where once it might have brought a reflex cry of "censorship" from libertarians of both left and right.

Mr Alton's proposal would extend the power of the Board of Film Censors to prevent films containing gratuitous — and particularly sadistic — violence being made available to the general public. This would mean that such films could not be put on general release in cinemas, sold or hired in high street video shops, or broadcast on either terrestrial or satellite television. They would not be banned completely since they could still be shown in cinema clubs, but they would effectively be removed from the domestic scene.

MPs' postbags can be leaving them in little doubt that the general public would welcome controls of some kind. Anxiety about screen violence is now being rightly distinguished from the blanket censorship of earlier campaigns which condemned the depiction of sex as vehemently as that of torture. The role which one particularly notorious film — *Child's Play 3* — played in the Bulger trial brought urgency into what had been an academic debate about the effects of screened brutality.

There was never any definite proof that the two ten year olds who tortured and killed James Bulger had watched the film which their crime in part resembled. But even if *Child's Play 3* was guilty only by association in that case, the episode left a deep sense of

disquiet: what kind of urban culture allowed such material to circulate freely in homes with young children? The all-party amendment would make it an offence for such video material to be shown anywhere — including private homes — where "children under the age of 18 are admitted". Thus any adult screening such material in a house where children live (or "are admitted") would be committing a crime: a strong but controversial remedy for parental irresponsibility.

Child's Play 3 also featured in the trial of the youths who tortured and killed 16-year-old Suzanne Capper: she had been forced by her tormentors to listen repeatedly to a refrain from its soundtrack. Those still opposed to any legal checks on video violence will point out that of the thousands of young people who have watched the film illicitly, few — if any — were influenced to the extent of imitation. But strict limitation is not the only measure of influence.

Repeated images of frenzied violence and sexual sadism, sometimes in the guise of horror films aimed specifically at the youth market, are contributing to a culture which accepts cruelty and perversion as normal. The suggestion may be to believe that forms of human bestiality which would never otherwise have occurred to them are now both thinkable and commonplace.

The Home Secretary is right to give Mr Alton's amendment sympathetic consideration. The public would welcome a carefully drafted change in the law not only because of the specific influence which particular films may have had, but because the existence of a depraved video culture is, in itself, a disgrace.

CRICKET, LOVELY CRICKET

Richardson and Atherton are chips off an older block

It is a sorry world we live in. Everest is filthy, and cricketers are coarser. The crisp confidence of white flannels has succumbed to enforced inelegance. Test matches threaten to go the way of the dodo, pushed to extinction by the meretricious allure of the game's abbreviated form. Small boys swear when they play in parks: imitation is the worst form of flattery. What once were vices are now manners: cricket, that exquisite dower of games, is in danger of damnation.

Two men now have the job of shaking the dust from creeds forgotten. Michael Atherton, a dour Lancastrian unsplitt by Cambridge, and Richie Richardson, a phlegmatic Antiguan with the most cultured cover drive, promise to kiss cricket's frog back to its old princely state. England's endearing cricketers, after a harrowing season of unseemly battle with Australians, will face a chivalrous team of exuberant West Indians in a series of some considerable importance.

Significantly, there are new men at the helm. Vivian Richards, Richardson's predecessor, was a brooding genius who saw cricket as more than a game. He sulked and scowled, obsessed with ethnicity and a

bloated sense of mission. And Graham Gooch, careworn and unshaven, lacked what Robert Burns called "a spark o' nature's fire". The two teams are now led by captains of lighter style and step, and this will enrich the cricket played.

The West Indies under Richardson, and bound by the rule that permits no more than one bounce per over, are the "gentlemen" of international cricket. Combative and unyielding on the field of play, they rely for victory on the eloquence of cricketing skills rather than on sharpness of tongue, or length of moustache. Of the major cricketing sides, they share this proclivity for values from the age of sepia tint only with England and India. Australia and Pakistan today do not — a cleft that defies all facile explanations.

The series with the West Indies will be a muscular contest between upright men, and should restore the fading nobility of cricket. Richardson, the gangling Ambrose, Lara — the first great Trinidadian cricketer since Sonny Ramadhin — and Haynes, will adorn the game as much as Robin Smith, Salisbury, Hick and skipper Atherton. England will probably lose, but they will have sustained a "defeat without a war".

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

Parliament 'smothered' by ministers and red tape

From Mr Andrew Rowe, MP for Kent Mid (Conservative)

Sir, John Garrett's essay, "The smothering of Parliament" (January 17), arguing against "the overwhelming dominance of Government over Parliament", is both right and very important. There is a growing realisation that our Parliament is in dire need of reform.

I do not believe that all my electors know what they want me to do (indeed it changes from day to day and from elector to elector) but I do believe that many of them expect my job to include:

1. Early warning of policy decisions which directly affect my constituency. They are nearly always disappointed. Ministers find a hundred reasons why it is impossible to tell me anything until long after the media have had the story, written their piece and moved on to something else.

2. A serious input into policy at the formative stage. That's very unusual. I am fully entitled to write policy proposals and sometimes Government will take them up, but MPs get no early warning of policy decisions. We are far more often put in the position of defending pronouncements of which we had no notice and which we first heard on the radio.

3. Detailed scrutiny of legislation at the committee stage in order to improve it. It is much more common for the two front benches to connive at a distribution of committee time which ensures that even major Bills receive only perfunctory attention. In order to disguise this, business managers will point to the number of hours a Bill spends in committee, but if we were to

consider effective times the charade would be exposed.

It is not easy to change all this. Erskine May, the handbook of parliamentary procedure, lays a dead hand on our activities, and all of us fear to challenge it lest we end up with no agreement anywhere. The selection of all ministers and parliamentary private secretaries from within Parliament means that there is insufficient incentive to press for change. The extraordinary centralisation of government in the UK means that there has to be an endless mill of law-making.

I believe the time has come to have a robust public debate about what we want MPs to do in the 21st century.

Yours etc,
ANDREW ROWE,
House of Commons,
January 18.

From Mr Llew Smith, MP for Blaenau Gwent (Labour)

Sir, This week the Prime Minister has discussed his role in, if any, and knowledge of the ways in which the United Kingdom assisted Iraqi weapons procurement since the mid 1980s. He has also personally supported the linkage between a military export deal with Malaysia and Britain's overseas aid budget being used to bolster the deal with a £234 million concessional deal from public funds (reports, January 18, leading article, January 19).

At the Scott enquiry, Mr Major insisted that if a wrong answer (to a parliamentary question) were inadvertently given by a minister "a correction would be given in Hansard" (report, January 18). The Prime Minister would seem to be significantly

out of touch with parliamentary practice if he believes this is the case.

For instance, on November 3 last year (Hansard, col 239), when I asked the Foreign Secretary in a written question whether "the decision to grant support for the Pergau hydro-electric project in Malaysia was linked with any other bilateral trade agreement with Malaysia", Mr Lennox-Boyd, answering for the Overseas Development Administration, responded bluntly: "No."

Yet at question time on January 18 (Hansard, col 704), Mr Major appeared to contradict this reply in justifying the linkage, following the revelations by the ODA permanent secretary before the public accounts committee the previous day. No correction of Mr Lennox-Boyd's inaccurate reply to me has been placed in Hansard.

A further problem is the persistent blocking by the parliamentary Table Office, on procedural grounds, of written and oral questions submitted by MPs. Over the past year I have had over 200 questions blocked in this manner, including 62 on military matters. MPs are thus being denied their right to conduct their proper role both in checking purported facts issued by ministers and in probing policy.

The most insidious area where these "blocks" are still applied is in regard to questions on arms sale or military deals. It is because of this spurious secrecy that such scandals as the arms-to-Iraq/Iran business can continue over many years without Parliament discovering the problem.

Yours sincerely,
LLEW SMITH,
House of Commons.

Romeo, Juliet and the Headmistress

From Mrs Kate Agazarian

Sir, So the headmistress of a primary school in Hackney felt impelled to decline the offer made to her pupils of a subsidised trip to see a Royal Opera House production of *Romeo and Juliet*, saying that "until books, films and the theatre reflected all forms of sexuality, she would not be involving her pupils in heterosexual culture" (reports, January 20, 21).

She has since apologised ("I am dismayed at the distress I have caused to parents, staff and pupils by the unwelcome media attention which has focused on the school"). Nevertheless, it is any wonder that the teaching profession has suffered something of a decline in public esteem over the last decade or so when this sort of politically correct ideology has been, and continues to be, promoted by people who hold high office within the educational establishment?

As a parent and teacher, I too want our children to benefit from a wide cultural range within their curriculum, both classic and contemporary. I also wish for their learning to reflect society as it actually is. What I object to strongly is the social engineering which seems to be the priority for some vocal groups who have hijacked the teaching profession.

You do not have to be a reactionary to wonder what the parents of those children at Kingsmead School in Hackney think about it all.

Yours faithfully,
KATE AGAZARIAN,
58 Churchgate Street,
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk,
January 21.

From Mr Nick Milner-Gulland

Sir, Recent literary research has uncovered a strong undercurrent of politically correct alternative sexuality in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Why is Romeo such a wimp? Juliet criticises him for kissing "by th' book". Romeo himself claims that Juliet's beauty has made him "effeminate", and Friar Lawrence describes him, pointedly, as "Unseemly woman in a seeming man".

His relationship with Mercutio and Benvolio is much closer than the plot requires, and he himself declares to Paris, "By heaven, I love thee better than myself", and again, to Tybalt, "I love thee better than thou canst devise".

Is there not a suggestion of an incestuous relationship when Juliet is said to have "loved her kinsman Tybalt dearly"? Capulet later hints darkly of "harlotry". And what of her relationship with the Nurse? When Juliet screams, "Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain", there are clear signs of the breakdown of a lesbian relationship.

Such a sexually diverse scenario can only be beneficial for the youth of today's open-minded schools.

Yours faithfully,
NICK MILNER-GULLAND,
Cumnor House, Danehill, Sussex.

Looking back on 1963

From Mr Alistair Horne

Sir, Mr David Badenoch (letter, January 12) has, I think, misinterpreted what I wrote about his late father and the advice he gave regarding Macmillan's prostate. I did not suggest "that there was a possible cancer of the prostate". The essential fact is what Macmillan himself came to believe, or persuaded himself, as a result of Mr Alec Badenoch's diagnosis, which was that it might be cancer, in which case he could not possibly continue in office.

His own doctor, Sir John Richardson, always reckoned that had he not been away on holiday on the evening of that crucial day, October 8, 1963, he would never have permitted the rather suggestive Macmillan to believe in the possibility of cancer, and could thus perhaps have prevented his unnecessary resignation. Consequently, the Conservatives lost the 1964 election, by a whisker; and Macmillan regretted his decision all the remaining 23 years of his life.

Yours truly,
ALISTAIR HORNE,
The Old Vicarage, Turville,
Nr Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire.

Sight for strained eyes

From Lord Erroll of Hale

Sir, Screw up your eyes if you want to read the dosage and other instructions on many products sold by chemists over the counter. The type is often smaller than "N5", the smallest on the standard sight-testing card that is used by ophthalmologists and opticians. Young and old with good normal eyesight often need a magnifying glass — or take a chance.

The instructions for many pre-packed refrigerated foods and, in particular, the cooking times, when N5 or smaller, are just as difficult to read. Can you, Sir, and your readers urge suppliers to make their dosage and cooking instructions legible to the normal naked eye?

Yours faithfully,
ERROLL OF HALE,
House of Lords,
January 20.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 071-782 5046.

Portillo speech

From Mr Gordon M. L. Smith

Sir, Rabbi Dr Charles H. Middleburgh (letter, January 18) is mistaken in writing of "anger, despair and betrayal", which is the routine language of any Opposition — smear and innuendo. Mr Michael Portillo's speech (report, January 15; letters, January 20) was protesting against the scurrilous and indiscriminate contempt of journalists, clerics and academics, not for politicians, but for the basic institutions of our civilisation: the monarchy, the churches, the judiciary, the Civil Service and Parliament itself, without the support of which the police could not prevent anarchy.

Yours faithfully,
GORDON M. L. SMITH,
9 Greenfield Way,
Storrington, West Sussex.

From the Reverend Thomas R. Hawthorn

Sir, I recently celebrated a service of Holy Communion using the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. During the course of this service I was required to pray for the Queen's Government in the following words:

And grant unto her whole Council, and to all that are put in authority under her, that they may truly and indifferently minister justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice...

How relevant to our modern condition are the words of this 332-year-old book.

Yours faithfully,
T. R. HAWTHORN,
62 Wollaton Road,
Lowestoft, Suffolk,
January 18.

Basics and morals

From Mr John Smith

Sir, Many people on reading Lord Rees-Mogg's interpretation of the Archbishop of Canterbury's comments on morality ("Missing the moral of wobble week", January 17) will have been deeply disturbed to find Dr Carey apparently departing from his previous clear stand.

It was good, therefore, to read the Archbishop's press officer (letter, January 20) stating quite clearly that Dr Carey continued to be firmly behind an absolutely clear policy of bodge and fudge on morality. In a changing world, one is grateful that some traditions are still so strongly resistant to change.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN SMITH,
Flat 2, 26 Chapter Street, SW1.

From Mrs Jill Welch

Sir, There appears great confusion in identifying the elements for a back-to-basics campaign. What could be clearer or more simple than the Ten Commandments?

Yours faithfully,
JILL WELCH,
Orchard House, Coles Oak Lane,
Dedham, Colchester, Essex.

From Dr Mervyn Hiskett

Sir, Surely "Basics" includes the compassionate notion of original sin which John Major appears to understand but of which — as it would appear from Valerie Grove's sympathetic interview with Mrs Diane Yeo today — some Suffolk women are alarmingly unaware.

Yours sincerely,
M. HISKETT,
Cherry Hay, Wrotham Road,
Meopham, Kent,
January 21.

Weekend Money letters, page 27

Care in the home

From Mrs Lucianne Sawyer

Sir, A debate took place in the House of Lords on January 17 to attempt to get some form of regulation of domiciliary care agencies — a crucial measure as more and more highly vulnerable people are cared for in their own homes, and as public-sector services are unable to meet the increasing demand.

Baroness Cumberlege, for the Government, claimed that regulation would hinder the development of such services. The contrary is the case. My association represents a very large number of organisations providing home care and we have been campaigning for proper regulation for the last four years.

As things stand each local authority is likely to develop its own standards and procedure for registering agencies. The cost of working party after working party, and committee after committee, is already mounting up. But for the agencies the situation is horrendous.

Any agency which operates over a large area, or nationally, will have the utmost difficulty in complying with the differing requirements of each local authority. The charges for the

registration process will be prohibitive for any agency which needs to register with a number of different authorities, and will put up the cost of care.

Further, some local authorities are preferring to work with residential or nursing homes simply because they have the advantage of statutory registration. This restricts the development of agencies specialising in providing domiciliary care and who have the skills to manage a dispersed workforce.

A properly thought-out national scheme which sets minimum acceptable standards, and which all local authorities recognise, so that any agency would only have to go through the registration process once, would be less administratively cumbersome and less expensive.

People who go into nursing homes or residential homes are protected by statutory regulation. The increasing number of people who are equally vulnerable, but who stay at home, should be afforded equal protection.

Yours sincerely,
LUCIANNE SAWYER
(President), United Kingdom
Homecare Association,
206 Worple Road, Wimbledon, SW20,
January 19.

CrossRail and Jubilee

From Mr Wyndham Thomas

Sir, I know of no evidence to support the claim by Mr Peter Morgan and his co-signatories that the proposed CrossRail project "is vital for the future of London as a world-class capital city" (letter, January 17). Neither would it "link the Thames Valley and the Thames Estuary" in any economically significant way.

But even if both claims had substance, the most powerful case against CrossRail is that the taxpayer would have to provide almost all the estimated £2 billion cost. In addition, the Government would have to guarantee a good profit return on the private sector's putative, unknown, but much smaller share of the funding. All this on top of the £1.9 billion committed to the Jubilee line extension — towards which the banks trying to salvage Canary Wharf have promised £400 million spread over 25 years.

There is probably a much better case for CrossRail than for the Jubilee line. But there is no case at all for building both. Their combined cost

would be at least £5 billion, almost entirely falling on the taxpayer. Now, on the evidence of the first Jubilee line contracts, would British firms, their employees and shareholders be the beneficiaries of that expenditure?

The first priority should be modernisation of the present Underground system. London Transport says that this would cost about £900 million a year for ten years. The Chancellor allocated only £450 million for this essential work in his autumn statement, because he had to find £460 million for the Jubilee line extension.

The Treasury caved in over the Jubilee line. It should concede no more, except for the desperately needed modernisation programme, which is vital for London's future, and to support the many deserving public transport projects in our other cities and towns.

Yours faithfully,
WYNDHAM THOMAS
(Member, London Docklands
Development Corporation, 1981-88),
8 Westwood Park Road,
Peterborough, Cambridgeshire.

Losey and friends

From Mr Harold Pinter

Sir, In your review of the biography of Joseph Losey (January 20) Dirk Bogarde is quoted as asserting that "he had a quite extraordinary capacity for making enemies of those who liked and respected him". I worked with Joseph Losey on four films and knew him for over 20 years. I had the deepest affection and admiration for him and we never had a cross word.

Yours faithfully,
HAROLD PINTER,
c/o Judy Dais Associates,
83 Eastbourne Mews, W2.

1745 and all that

From Mrs Shirley Grant

Sir, I read that the present owners of the North British Hotel in Edinburgh have changed its name to the Fortie Grand Balmoral (Weekend, January 15). This new title lacks resonance and shows a sad lack of understanding of the historical significance of names. Why not just call it the Fortie Five?

Yours faithfully,
SHIRLEY GRANT,
Chowles, Ruspur, West Sussex.

Tories and tax

From Mr George Scales

Sir, Mr Julian Humphrey's heart was quite right to bleed when the top rate of income tax under Labour was 83 per cent (letter, January 19). If people are to be encouraged to do their best, a person earning ten times more than another should pay ten times more tax, not 25 times more.

Would a fruit-pickers aim to pick the maximum if a penalty was imposed above a given amount? If a 150 per cent reduction was levied for those offering greater skills or more responsibility, who would take the job?

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE SCALES,
Cobbler's Piece, Abbess Roding,
Ongar, Essex.

From Mrs Mavis Sargent

Sir, If I could advise those earning £1 million a year how to pay "virtually no tax at all", I would have some hope of joining their privileged ranks myself. Perhaps Gordon Brown ("The Tories lied about taxation", January 14) could tell me how it is done.

Yours faithfully,
MAVIS SARGENT (accountant),
71-73 Carter Lane, EC4.

OBITUARIES

OGINGA ODINGA

Oginga Odinga, leader of Kenya's parliamentary opposition and former Vice-President, died from a heart attack in hospital in Kisumu, western Kenya, on January 20. He was believed to be 82 having been born, probably, in October 1911, although the birth was not officially registered.

OGINGA ODINGA was one of the most colourful characters in Kenya's political life. But in spite of a political career that lasted 45 years, he spent only four years in government and much more than that either in prison or under house arrest. An outspoken radical socialist for most of his life and the political leader of the Luo, Kenya's second largest tribal grouping, he was the senior associate of Jomo Kenyatta in the campaign for independence from Britain and in the forefront of efforts to have Kenyatta released when the Kenyan leader was imprisoned by the British authorities.

During the constitutional negotiations in 1962 Odinga was proposed by Kenyatta as Finance Minister for the first post-colonial government but rejected by Reginald Maudling, the Colonial Secretary, as being too left wing. Instead, in 1962, Kenyatta named Odinga Minister of Home Affairs. Odinga used his ministerial platform to sing the praises of radical socialism and to denounce western imperialism.

Two years later he became Vice-President but in 1966 — amid fears that he posed a threat to Kenyatta's rule — he was removed from the leadership of the ruling Kenyan African National Union and resigned the vice-presidency. He spent a quarter-of-century in the political wilderness but, in what had become a one-party state, remained a potent symbol of dissent.

He became a leading figure in the campaign that resulted in December 1992 in the first multi-party elections for 26 years and came third in the presidential ballot. Then, last year, he became the main parliamentary opposition leader when his rival Kenneth Matiba lost his seat.

Jaramogi Ajuma Odinga Odinga was born in Nyamira, central

Nyanza in western Kenya, and selected by his father, a wood worker, as the one child the family could afford to send to school. He attended various schools before going on to Makerere University in Uganda, where he took a teaching diploma. He then returned to Nyanza to teach at Maseno School and at the Veterinary Training Centre in Maseno. He later resigned from his teaching posts to found the Luo Thrift and Trading Corporation. In the late 1940s he was active in local district councils.

In 1948 Odinga was running a shop in Maseno when Kenyatta visited the area while touring through Nyanza preaching the need for a national African political movement. Odinga gave him his unqualified support and accepted a seat on the central committee of the Kenya African Union, building up the Nyanza branch into one of the strongest in the territory. In 1952 Kenyatta was arrested and convicted for managing Mau Mau, and soon afterwards KAU itself was banned.

Odinga went to India in 1953 on a study tour and from his return until 1957 served as the president of the Luo Union, a social organisation which he used to prevent members of the Luo tribe from being enlisted for service in the loyalist forces against Mau Mau. He travelled widely in East Africa, and though he was arrested and questioned during the Emergency, he was never detained.

In 1957 Odinga entered central politics as African elected member for Central Nyanza of the Legislative Council. He represented the same area after the 1961 elections, and the year before had become vice-president of KANU.

Odinga was a member of the common front of African Elected Members which visited London for the Lancaster House constitutional conference and in 1960 his passport was withdrawn on his return to Kenya after visiting the Soviet Union and China. At the end of 1960 a dispute between his followers and those of Tom Mboya, a fellow Luo, nearly split KANU.

Odinga's political volatility caused a lot of Kenyans, black and white, to suffer grave misgivings over his ideological leanings. In 1966, as the



rift that had been for some time apparent between Odinga and Kenyatta grew wider, a final break became inevitable.

When Odinga left the government he took with him a small group of supporters. They fought by-elections, and were largely routed, though Odinga himself was re-elected to parliament with a large majority.

In October 1969, however, Odinga was detained after riots in Kisumu which were said to have threatened the President's life and forced his bodyguard to open fire. Odinga's party — the Kenya People's Union — was proscribed and several of its members detained after the riots in which some 11 people were killed and

scores were injured. In the following general election — the first held since independence — Odinga had no voice while that of Kenyatta was unopposed. Ironically, Odinga, who had never been imprisoned during the Mau Mau uprising was kept 15 months at the former Hola camp where Kenyatta himself had been detained by the British.

Behind the quarrel between Kenyatta and Odinga lay not simply ambition for power but fundamental ideological differences. Odinga accused Kenyatta of accepting too readily the administrative and economic doctrine of his colonial predecessors. Odinga's own mentors were Mao Tse-tung and Lenin. After

leaving the independence conference at Lancaster House he went immediately to Peking and Moscow. Pictures of Patrice Lumumba and Kwame Nkrumah adorned his walls. Odinga sought and was believed to have obtained substantial backing from the Communist powers and these Communist links were as disturbing for Kenya's new political leaders as they were for its colonial ones. He was thus a marked man. His "promotion" to the office of vice-president in 1964 was widely interpreted as a means of clipping his wings.

For years after he left government office he was subjected to harassment by the Kenyan authorities and his passport was withdrawn. Detained until 1971 he remained in the political wilderness until Kenyatta's death in 1978. When Daniel arap Moi became President, Odinga swore allegiance to him but was blocked from regaining his parliamentary seat by accusations that he had insulted Kenyatta. The following year President Moi gave him a government post but his continued criticism and allegations of government corruption led again to expulsion from the party in 1982 and eight more months of house arrest.

Odinga was accused of being involved in the political turmoil that led to a 1982 coup attempt and implicated in Mwakenya, a subversive underground opposition group, associations he emphatically denied. Over the next three years, however, he campaigned against government corruption, for improved human rights and the legalisation of opposition parties.

In the latter stage of his career, his fly-whisk and cloak of monkey-tails had been replaced by an English cloth cap and tweed-jacket, thus emphasising how his fiery radicalism had evolved into a more innocent democratic pluralism. By the end a frail man with a round face and spectacles, he never lost the respect of the Luo people. But his split with a Kenneth Matiba, a reformist politician from the Kikuyu, splintered the opposition vote and handed victory to President Moi with a minority of the votes cast.

Odinga Odinga had four wives and 18 children.

MARTIN CORKE

Martin Corke, OBE, brewer, died of cancer on January 14 aged 70. He was born on June 8, 1923.



ALTHOUGH he spent most of his life as a brewer Martin Corke excelled in the pursuits of the country gentleman and served his county of Suffolk with the selfless dedication of an earlier age. He was of a more radical streak than the bare details of his career would suggest. He was a founding member of the SDP and combined sporting prowess with a deep interest in literature and the arts.

Martin Dewe Corke was born in Murree, now in Pakistan, where his father was acting colonel in the 16th Punjab Regiment. He was educated at Radley and in 1940, on leaving school, he rejoined his family in India. For a time he taught classics there, before joining his father's regiment. Invalided out in 1944 with tuberculosis he joined in 1946, after an apprenticeship at Brake-spear's Brewery, Greene King, the Suffolk brewery where his uncle had been managing director. Corke was appointed to the board in 1953 and was joint managing director, 1979-83 and then sole managing director until his retirement in 1986. He was a non-executive director until 1992.

During his long career at Greene King, which saw it advance to being one of the leading regional brewers, while still maintaining its reputation for traditional beer and preserving relationships with the communities it served (to say nothing of the tenants of its rapidly increasing number of pubs), he managed to find time for a sporting and public life. He had been captain of cricket at Radley and went on to play for Suffolk (captain, 1954-64, and later chairman). He was known as

a free-hitting, unorthodox right-hand bat. It was said that "he could keep wicket if pressed — but best not pressed." He also played hockey for the Cambridge City Hockey Club and gained his Cambridge County colours in 1947-8. He also hunted regularly from the mid-1960s.

Corke served on successive Suffolk health authorities for 38 years and was chairman of the Suffolk Health Authority, 1982-83. Nationally, from 1986 to 1990, he was chairman of the Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine. He was appointed OBE in 1993.

He was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1961 and was chairman of the Saint Edmundsbury Bench, 1982-85. He served his county as a deputy lieutenant from 1988. His passionate interest in the arts, shared by his first wife, Jean Armour (daughter of the sporting artist G. D. Armour) who died in 1980, and by his second wife Dr Frances Marks, led him to campaign tirelessly for the Theatre Royal in Bury St Edmunds, leased for 999 years by the National Trust from Greene King for a peppercorn rent.

He leaves his widow Frances, and two daughters and two sons (one of whom has followed his father into the brewery) from his first marriage.

SIR ASHLEY CLARKE

Sir Ashley Clarke, GCMG, GCVO, diplomat, died on January 20 aged 90. He was born on June 26, 1903.

FEW modern British diplomats are lucky enough to end their careers with nine solid years in a single posting. But that was the good fortune of Ashley Clarke, who served in Rome as British ambassador to Italy from 1953 to 1962. Although he was certainly an envoy of the old school, it would be wrong to see him solely as the product of a more leisurely age.

That was demonstrated by the last thirty years of his life. As soon as he retired, he immediately threw his energies into a wide range of activities in the field of the arts (always his first love) for which he was well fitted by his

talents as a pianist and his erudition as an art historian. At the time of his death he was still serving as president of the Venice in Peril Fund.

Henry Ashley Clarke was the son of a doctor. He was educated at Repton and Pembroke College, Cambridge, of which he became an honorary fellow in 1962. He entered the Diplomatic Service in 1925, rising steadily through a varied succession of posts — third secretary at Budapest in 1925 and at Warsaw in 1927, second secretary at Constantinople in 1928, at the Foreign Office and at the General Disarmament Conference at Geneva in 1931. From 1934 to 1938 he served at the British embassy in Tokyo, having been promoted to first secretary in 1936.

Back in London a year before war broke out, he worked in the Foreign Office,

1938-44, reaching the rank of counsellor in 1942. His next posting abroad was to neutral Lisbon, as minister. From there he went straight to Paris, serving both Alfred Duff Cooper (later Lord Norwich) and Sir Oliver Harvey (later Lord Harvey of Tasburgh). In 1949 he returned to the Foreign Office to succeed Harold Caccia as chief clerk, in charge of administration and personnel, being promoted to be a deputy under-secretary in 1950.

In 1953 Clarke succeeded Sir Victor Mallet as ambassador in Rome. During his long tenure of this embassy his interests were frankly cultural rather than, as is now more fashionable, economic and commercial. After the return of Trieste to Italy in 1954, there were no serious problems in Anglo-Italian relations, the warmth of which were demon-

strated during the Queen's successful state visit in 1961.

Clarke, who had little use for the political dispatches on which British diplomats are often, but erroneously, thought to spend most of their time, was able to give the preponderant part of his energies to cultural activities, in which he achieved a personal position unusual for an ambassador. He lectured successfully in Italian and did much to make the British cultural heritage and especially British music better known in Italy. His achievements were recognised by an honorary doctorate of Genoa University in 1956 and in 1962 by the exceptional honour of election as an honorary member of the Accademia Pilaonica Romana.

On his retirement in 1962 Clarke became London adviser to the Banca Commerciale

Italiana and in 1964 a member of the general board of the Assicurazioni Generali of Trieste. He threw himself with enthusiasm into the varied cultural positions for which he was in demand. From 1962 to 1967 he was a governor of the BBC and from 1962 to 1966 a member of the National Theatre Board. He was a governor of the British Institute of Recorded Sound, a member of the governing body of the Royal Academy of Music, of the advisory council of the Victoria & Albert Museum, of the council of the British School at Rome, of the executive committee of the Keats-Shelley Society, and of the D'Oyly Carte Trust.

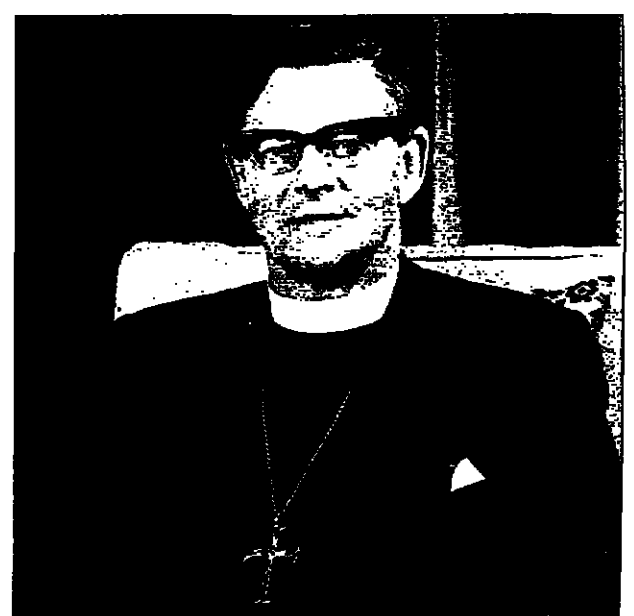
He was chairman of the Royal Academy of Dancing, 1964-69, and after the disastrous floods in Florence, was an equally dedicated chairman of the Italian Art and Archives Rescue Fund, 1966-69. He took an active part in Europa Nostra, the federation of European societies for the preservation of historic houses and monuments.

Few individuals can have enjoyed a more fruitful retirement in so many fields. Yet in 1971 he decided to give up all his other activities and to move to Venice, in order to concentrate on the cause of "Venice in Peril", the campaign, of which he was vice-chairman, to save Venice from sinking into its lagoon; and he only returned to this country several years later.

Clarke was appointed GCMG in 1946, KCMG in 1952, GCVO in 1961 on the occasion of the Queen's visit to Rome and GCMG in 1962. He was also a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Italy. His marriage to Virginia Bell was dissolved in 1960 and he married, secondly, in 1962 Frances Molynex who survives him. There were no children of either marriage.

THE RIGHT REV RICHARD WIMBUSH

The Right Rev Richard Wimbush, Bishop of Argyle and the Isles, 1963-77, and Primate of the Episcopal Church in Scotland, 1974-77, died in York on January 4 aged 84. He was born on March 18, 1909.



RICHARD WIMBUSH, a scholar by inclination and reticent by disposition, was never the best known of the seven bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Even in his first year as Primate his fame tended to be overshadowed by his almost exact contemporary, Bishop Kenneth Carey of Edinburgh, a more assured figure steeped in the old-fashioned Anglican tradition. Yet the fact that his episcopal colleagues should have turned to Wimbush in 1974 — when he was only three years short of retirement — to become their titular leader is sufficient evidence of the high regard in which he was held.

Richard Knivet Wimbush was born at Terrington, near Castle Howard, in Yorkshire, where his father was vicar for 42 years. Educated at Haileybury and Oriel College, Oxford, where he obtained a second in Mods and a first in Theology, he prepared for ordination at Cuddesdon Theological College. The year he was ordained he joined the staff there as chaplain, serving from 1934 to 1937.

He then held curacies in his native Yorkshire at Pocklington and St Wilfrid's, Harrogate, moving to become rector of Melsomby in the North Riding of the county in 1942. He spent six happy years there with his wife and young family before becoming principal of the Episcopal Theological College at Edinburgh at the invitation of Eric Graham, his own former principal at Cuddesdon and by then Bishop of Edinburgh. He successfully re-established the college,

which had been passing through a difficult period of postwar readjustment, and remained there for 15 years until he became Bishop of Argyle and the Isles in 1963.

He returned to his native Yorkshire in 1977, acting as assistant bishop in the York diocese and also as priest-in-charge of several Wolds' villages near Beverley. He retired finally to York itself in 1983, where he and his wife Molly enjoyed a few peaceful years before she died in 1989. He retained his own mental powers to the end of his life. Never one to seek the limelight, Dick Wimbush was held in great affection by his friends and colleagues. Gentle, considerate and quiet-spoken to the point of diffidence, he nevertheless firmly maintained Christian priorities in his personal and pastoral relationships. It was said that some eyebrows were raised at his absence from the Easter Eucharist at Oban Cathedral during his first year as bishop. The reason was that he had discovered that some

small outlying churches would have no service at all on that day and that he was the only available clergyman free to repair the omission. A lifelong Anglo-Catholic, he was emphatic that this did not inhibit him from being open-minded or prevent co-operation with other Anglicans and members of other churches, not least the established Church of Scotland.

Always a great walker and lover of natural beauty, he took delight in the wonderful scenery of his diocese, whose pastoral responsibilities and opportunities are greater than might at first appear. Quite apart from all the holiday-makers, a growing number of English people and Anglicised Scots retire or settle in Argyle and the Isles. Many of them must have been encouraged to find at home in their midst someone who, without pretension or pomposity, exemplified so clearly all that is best in Anglicanism.

Richard Wimbush is survived by three sons and a daughter.



Weekend anniversaries

Today
BIRTHS: Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor 1610-21, London, 1561; Joseph Hume, social reformer, 1777; George Gordon Byron, 6th Baron Byron, poet, London, 1788; August Strindberg, dramatist, Stockholm, 1849; D.W. Griffith, film director, Floydfork, Kentucky, 1875; U Thant, Secretary-General of the UN 1961-71, Pantanaw, Burma, 1909; Sam Cooke, singer, Chicago, 1931.
DEATHS: William Paterson, financier and founder of the Bank of England, London, 1719; Charles Keel, actor-manager, London, 1896; Queen Victoria, reigned 1837-1901, Osborne House, Isle of Wight, 1901; Walter Sickert, painter, Bath, 1942; Lyndon B. Johnson, 36th American President, 1963-69, San Antonio, Texas, 1973; Herbert Sutcliffe, cricketer, 1978.
The Allied landings began in Anzio, Italy, 1944.
The UK, Irish Republic and Denmark joined the Common Market, 1972.

Tomorrow
BIRTHS: Stendhal (Marie Henri Beyle) novelist, Grenoble, 1783; Edouard Manet, painter, Paris, 1832; Edith Wharton, novelist, New York, 1862; Sergei Eisenstein, film director, Riga, Russia, 1898; Airey Neave, MP, 1916.
DEATHS: William Pitt the Younger, Prime Minister 1783-1801 and 1804-06, London, 1806; Charles Kingsley, writer, London, 1875; Gustave Doré, illustrator, Paris, 1883; Anna Pavlova, prima ballerina, The Hague, 1931; Edvard Munch, painter, Oslo, 1944; Pierre Bouard, painter, Le Camet, France, 1947; Sir Alexander Korda, film producer, London, 1956; Paul Robeson, singer and actor, Philadelphia, 1976; Samuel Barber, composer, New York, 1981; Salvador Dali, painter, Figueras, Spain, 1989.
Fletcher Christian and The Bounty mutineers landed on Pitcairn Island, 1790.
Ramsay MacDonald formed the first Labour government, 1924.

SUNDAY OBSERVANCE.

THE PRIMATE'S WARNING.

Messages from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr. MacDonald, M.P., and others were read at a largely attended meeting at Maidstone last night in support of Sunday observance. Colonel Sir Charles Warle presided.

The Archbishop of Canterbury wrote: "I have no hesitation in reiterating my conviction that members of the Church of Christ ought everywhere to make their voices heard in support of our duty to safeguard for dear life the splendid traditions which are ours as to the sacred heritage of the Lord's Day. I would bid all whom my words can reach to guard that heritage with wisdom as well as enthusiasm. A strange selfishness leads many people, some of whom have leisure all the week through, to spoil the Sundays of other men by the carelessness which leads a man to think only of himself. Those in responsible positions must have their eyes open to the danger of unintended progress from the provision of innocent recreation to the encouragement of great competitive games or matches, with inevitable conditions of popular gatherings and excitement and consequently multiplied labour. My

ON THIS DAY

January 22, 1927



Strong support for the continuance of Sunday observance was expressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Ramsay MacDonald in messages read out at this meeting in Kent.

own feeling is that a word of warning is gravely needed at this time, a word of warning to the whole country and to public bodies in particular, that if Sunday were to be given up chiefly to pleasure-seeking and if facilities for such pleasure-seeking were to be indefinitely multiplied the price would be deplorable. We should lose the quietude and recuperative restfulness of Sunday in proportion as Sunday travelling, Sunday trading, and Sunday labour were increased. Those on whom the sacrifice would be enforced belong chiefly to the class which has the greatest need of the advantages of Sunday, and is least able

effectively to secure them." Mr. MacDonald wrote: "The question of one day's rest in seven (and by rest I do not mean recreation) is of the utmost importance, not only to the physical, but to the mental condition of our people. I agree with you that Labour is more interested in this than is any other section of the community. We are getting altogether too superficial and too thoughtless, and unless we can pull ourselves up and accustom ourselves to getting inspiration from the deeper silences that lie within us, neither as individuals nor as a nation shall we be able to face the great problems that modern civilisation places before us."

Sir Harry Lauder, in a message from West Virginia, U.S.A., said: "I am against Sunday theatre shows, and I have told my fellow artists that if we fail to uphold our religion and our Sunday, men will scorn us, women will weep for us, and children will be taught to hate the name of the theatre and the curses of the generations to come will be for ever at the stage door."

A resolution was passed at the meeting expressing the hope that any encroachment on the sanctity of the Lord's Day should be discouraged, whether in the direction of Sunday trading, Sunday labour, or Sunday sport.

THE TIMES
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~ REMEMBERED ~

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NEWS

Major urges Sinn Fein to talk

Amid signs that London and Dublin are preparing to move into the next phase of the Northern Ireland peace process without the republicans, John Major yesterday told Sinn Fein to stop its delaying tactics and start talking.

As the Government indicated that the momentum of the talks was about to be stepped up, the Prime Minister told Gerry Adams there would be no renegotiation of the Downing Street statement. Pages 1, 2

Ministry linked to 'homes for votes'

The Government, it emerged yesterday, has paid more than half the cost of grants given by Westminster City Council to allow tenants to buy homes. The money has been used to buy property all over Britain, as well as Barbados, Italy, Australia, Egypt and Chile. Page 1

Teacher queried

Jane Brown, the headmistress who banned her children from *Romeo and Juliet* because of its heterosexuality, was questioned by her employers about reports of her living with a woman who helped to appoint her. Page 1

Chancellor confident

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, is confident growth will accelerate this year. Pages 1, 6, 19

Mackenzie moves

Kelvin Mackenzie, editor of *The Sun*, is leaving to become managing director of BSKyB. Pages 1, 2

Rosyth gloom

The future of the royal dockyard at Rosyth is back in doubt because of Treasury demands for cuts of more than £1.5 billion over three years. Page 8

Drum majorette in all-male Citadel

Shannon Faulkner, a former high-school drum majorette, deleted all reference to her sex when she applied to the all-male Citadel military academy in Charleston, South Carolina, which rescinded its acceptance as soon as it discovered the truth. But a Supreme Court ruling has allowed her to break a 151-year tradition. Page 12

Serbia vote

Russia's new parliament has voted to lift sanctions against Serbia and to oppose Nato air strikes on the Bosnian Serbs. Pages 1, 11

Video assault

Campaigners who have met Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, plan to step up censorship calls against violent video films and games. Page 3

Rare candidates

Warren Rudman, a former Republican senator, became the third man to reject the job of US Defence Secretary. Page 9

End of the road

Ford is to scrap the XR 'hot hatchback' range, because it has become the victim of spiralling insurance rates and the target of joyriders. Page 8



Tim Yeo, the former environment minister, and Julia Stent, mother of his illegitimate child, after they had a three-hour lunch at Langan's Brasserie in London yesterday. Mr Yeo's wife, Diane, publicly vowed in *The Times* that she would stand by him

BUSINESS

Lloyds: Litigating Feltrim names voted to reject their share of the settlement offer. Page 19

LWT: The £735 million hostile bid by Granada for LWT will not be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Page 19

Economy: A steady recovery appears to have been maintained giving growth of 2 per cent for 1993. Page 19

Banking: Bank of Edinburgh, set up three years ago, has lost its banking licence. Page 19

Markets: The FT-SE 100 index rose 14.2 to 3484.2, a record. Sterling's trade-weighted index fell from 82.7 to 82.6 after a fall from \$1.5004 to \$1.4948 but a rise from DM2.6047 to DM2.6117. Page 22

SPORT

Golf: Howard Clark is three shots clear after two rounds of the Moroccan Open. Page 36

Yachting: In the Whitbread Round-the-World race, the leader is Tokyo, 200 miles from Auckland. Page 34

Ice skating: Katarina Witt, the former Olympic champion, struggled to recapture her past glories at the European Championships in Copenhagen. Pages 35, 36

Crickets: Andrew Longmore meets the two captains preparing for the Test series between England and West Indies. Page 32

Football: Robbie Fowler, Liverpool's leading scorer, is unlikely to play for up to six weeks after suffering a cracked bone in his leg in the FA Cup tie at Bristol. Page 35

Weird and wondrous: Lord McAlpine is auctioning a treasure chest of curiosities. Page 1

Paradise found: The start of a two-part guide to island hopping in the Caribbean. Page 3

Shopping for your supper: Frances Bissell begins a gastronomic guide to supermarkets. Page 5

Free CDs: An exclusive music offer for Times readers. Page 7

Trading places: The joys of ditching a profession to go into trade. Page 8, 9

Not so rotten: A new approach to dealing with the dreaded dry rot. Page 11

Down on the farm: Paul Heiney falls out with his favourite cow. Page 16

To play the writer: Novelist Michael Dobbs, the creator of *House of Cards* and *To Play the King*, has a new book out this week about a dastardly American Defence Secretary. Weekend page 14

Home's birthday party: The great American opera singer Marilyn Horne celebrated her 60th birthday with fellow divas at Carnegie Hall. Weekend page 14

Trouble down the pit: A new stage thriller, set in a Scottish coalmine, probably breaks the world record for four-letter words. Benedict Nightingale thoroughly enjoyed it. Weekend page 14

Stirring Calles: EMI has dug into the archives for more Callas live on stage. Best offering: Donizetti's *Anna Bolena*. Weekend page 14

Mindpower: *Horizon* examines the theory that the brain is the product of our experience. Page 3
Absolute winner: The further adventures of AbFab. Page 5
Gaughing Greenaway: David Robinson on Peter Greenaway, filmmaker they love to hate. Page 6

Cold comfort Kremlin

It is now becoming clear that President Yeltsin's new government gives dangerous new strength to the old guard. Page 15

Violence in the home

The existence of a depraved video culture is a disgrace. Page 15

Cricket, lovely cricket

The West Indies under Richardson are the 'gentlemen' of international cricket. Of the major cricketing sides, they share this proclivity for old values only with England and India. Page 15

BEN MACINTYRE

The bizarre affair of the nobbling of the ice-skater Nancy Kerrigan has been embraced by pundits as a cautionary tale. Page 14

PETER BARNARD

The managements of the football team which exemplifies 'England's national game' is coveted by thousands and grants permanent glory to none. Page 14

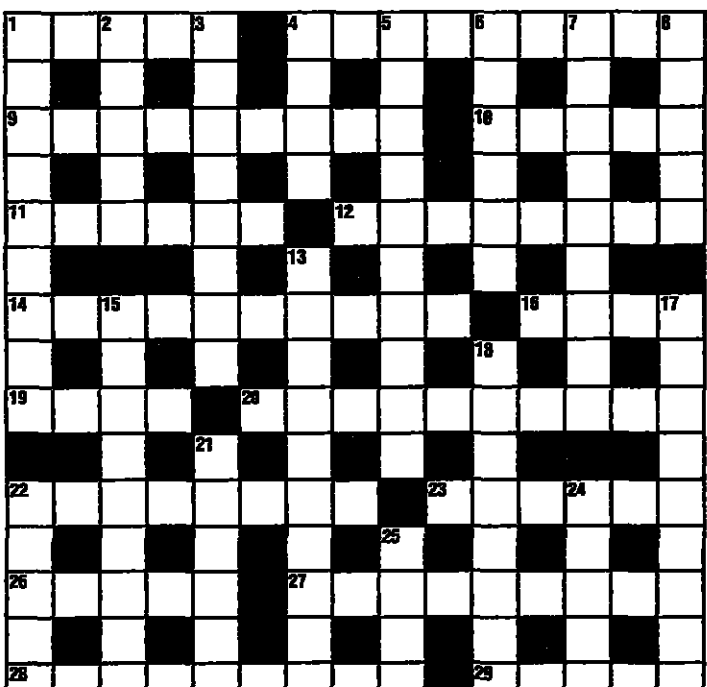
Oginga Odinga, Leader of Kenya's parliamentary opposition: Sir Ashley Clarke, Ambassador to Italy, 1953-62; Richard Wimbush, Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, 1963-77; Martin Corke, brewer. Page 17

MPs write of their concern for parliamentary democracy. Page 15

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 19,446



Name/Address



ACROSS

- 1 Cape with a hat is warm... (5).
- 4 ...and prevents cold starts outside (9).
- 9 People are up here for river game (9).
- 10 Silly people sometimes seen going up the wall (5).
- 11 A cox in rowing is in need of oxygen (6).
- 12 Solidly-built son in tangle of shrubs (8).
- 14 The most important single monument? (10).
- 16 Metal twisted into a locket or clasp (4).
- 19 Win attention standing next to knight (4).
- 20 Policeman answering to a buzzer (10).
- 22 Face-saving sort of surgery? (8).
- 23 Bishop loose-jointed and jaunty (6).
- 26 Let learner-driver have comfort! (5).
- 27 Circle Line hope to work for port authority, say (9).
- 28 Slips perhaps but mends life somehow (9).
- 29 Biggles is one in story (5).

DOWN

- 1 Number announced is Elgar's piece (9).
- 2 Leg-ring in prison (5).
- 3 Cornflake, in fact, has left a track (8).
- 4 Stuffs cushions (4).
- 5 Uniform passed? Just! (4-6).
- 6 Gift of frilly clothing for example (10).
- 7 Gown with fur for evening wear (5,4).
- 8 Exhausted writer in street (5).
- 13 Like the stars of Forest, mill about! (10).
- 15 At speed, asteroid enters regions remote from Earth (9).
- 17 Brightest of climbers' leaders on top of the world? (9).
- 18 Flop about, holding one penny for a sticky sweet (8).
- 21 Saw endless suffering in plot (6).
- 22 One in soft leather is an eastern ruler (5).
- 24 Rand found in money-box can be used as a bar ornament (5).
- 25 Article advanced (of undeclared authorship) (4).

Solution to Puzzle No 19,440

HOUSMAN TITCHING
LIRI O N R A L U
ORAWO OLBAILLY
ENCK K L S B E
BLIGHT LATHERED
O U A N E
UNMAN UNFOUNDED
N C D I R A
DISPERAL SAKER
K K E A N K
MAINTAIN SMOOTH
O N U P S A C O
SAFETYUO JOKER
E U T E U O S
SOLDIER GIRONDE

Solution to Puzzle No 19,445

COPYBOOK SPAGES
U E I D S R M Y
THREEPENNYOPERA
O E E O V L N
FLOODED WRESTED
F R E D R I
IMPROPER BISON
N E O O O G
AURIC OPPOSITE
R O H P T M
COMSLIP GREMONA
I R O O A N V I
SLOUGHOFDESPOND
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Wiltshire/Dorset	730

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Wiltshire/Dorset	747
Wiltshire/Dorset	748
Wiltshire/Dorset	749
Wiltshire/Dorset	750

HOURS OF DARKNESS

TODAY
Sun rises: 7:53 am
Sun sets: 4:33 pm
Moon sets: 12:00 am
Full moon January 27

TOMORROW
Sun rises: 7:52 am
Sun sets: 4:34 pm
Moon sets: 12:01 am
Full moon January 27

London 4:32 pm to 7:53 am
Bristol 4:42 pm to 8:02 am
Edinburgh 4:25 pm to 8:25 am
Manchester 4:32 pm to 8:10 am
Perthshire 4:50 pm to 8:08 am

The winners of last Saturday's competition are: E J Hall, Rose Lane, Liverpool; B Cooke, Sandway, Knarford; H S Holmes, Skipton Road, Keighley; B J Dell, Parkland Close, St Columb Minor, Newquay; B A Edmunds, Ceres Road, Cupar, Fife.

FORECAST

General: England and Wales, once any drizzle rain has cleared the S coast, should have a bright morning with a few showers, more likely in W. Wet and very windy weather will push into N England and Wales in afternoon, reaching remaining areas by midnight. Scotland and Northern Ireland will have a showery morning. More persistent rain will reach most parts by midday and winds will strengthen, with gales or severe gales likely. Rain should be more showery after dark.

SE, east S and SW England, E Anglia, E Midlands, Channel: Be: Any drizzle soon clearing, then brighter with a few showers. Wind SW, light increasing to fresh or strong. Max 10C (50F).

E, east N, NW and NE England, W Midlands, Wales, Lake, Lake: Sunny intervals and showers in morning, becoming wet and very windy later, with moderate increasing strong to gale, perhaps severe gale later. Max 9C (48F).

NIreland and all of mainland Scotland and W: Be: Becoming wet and very windy by midday, slackening after dark. Wind S to SW, strong increasing to gale or severe gale. Max 7C (45F).

Orkney, Shetland: Showers in morning, becoming wet and very windy, in afternoon. Wind W or SW, strong to gale, becoming S later. Max 4C (39F).

Outlook: Very windy with blustery showers tomorrow, drier and less windy on Monday.

MIDLANDS, WALES, LAKE, LAKE

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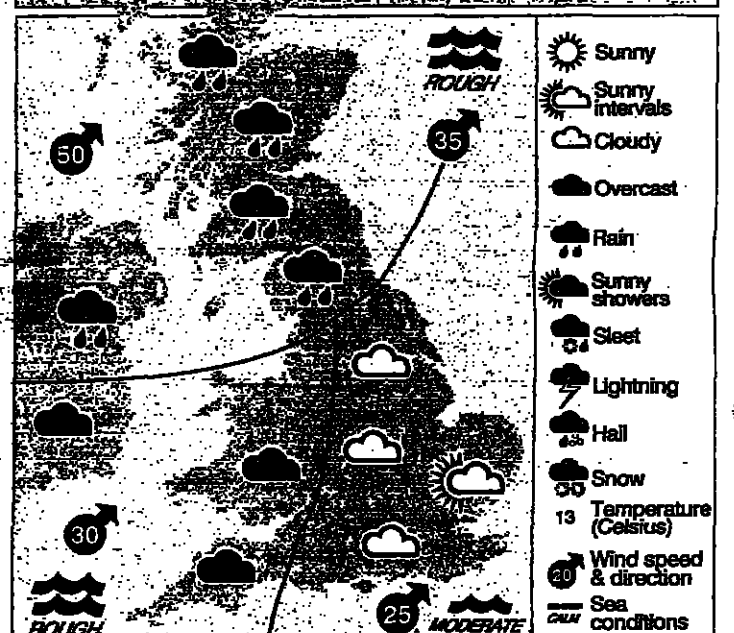
Sunny intervals and showers in morning, becoming wet and very windy later, with moderate increasing strong to gale, perhaps severe gale later. Max 9C (48F).

NIreland and all of mainland Scotland and W: Be: Becoming wet and very windy by midday, slackening after dark. Wind S to SW, strong increasing to gale or severe gale. Max 7C (45F).

Orkney, Shetland: Showers in morning, becoming wet and very windy, in afternoon. Wind W or SW, strong to gale, becoming S later. Max 4C (39F).

Outlook: Very windy with blustery showers tomorrow, drier and less windy on Monday.

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b) 08.45?
c) 09.00?
(A clue-see page 3)

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Tales of TV, newspapers and tycoons

Last week brought its share of drama in the world of media and it hardly requires Einstein-like capabilities to predict that further acts, hopefully not of a violent nature, are set to unfold during the coming week.

On Tuesday, Lord Hollick, chief executive of MAI, which controls 55 per cent of Meridian, the Southern broadcaster, confirmed months of speculation by way of launching an agreed £292 million takeover bid for Anglia TV. This was exceedingly good news for shareholders in Anglia who, having already watched the share price more than double during 1993, proved the beneficiaries of a further 180p rise to 664p, the net gain on the week finally being cut to 170p at 655p. Put another way, in the space of less than 13 months, Anglia's share price has risen the thick end of 240 per cent. All of which serves to put a 7 per cent return on a Granny Bond in a certain perspective. Less good news,

almost certainly, for many of Anglia's 560-strong workforce. Rationalisation and redundancies have a habit of proving synonymous.

MAI's foray comes hard on the heels of Carlton Communications' agreed bid for Central TV and Granada's on-going battle for control of LWT: a trio of acquisitions with a value, in total, of more than £1.75 billion. Such takeover activity is the direct result of the Government's decision to bow to the God of market forces and deregulate. In the event, the proposed amalgams will account for some 70 per cent of total ITV advertising, a factor which, even before the MAI/Anglia development, prompted the Incorporated Society of British Advertisers to call for intervention by Sir Bryan Carsberg, Director General of the Office of Fair Trading.

Carsberg clearly headed the ISBA's concern, witness yesterday's announcement by Michael Heseltine, Trade and

Industry Secretary, that he has requested the OFT to "seek undertakings" from Carlton and Granada "to remove competition fears in the TV advertising sales market". The Independent Television Commission has already flirted with the possible introduction of Chinese walls between "sales houses" such as Granada's Time Exchange (owned in conjunction with Scottish TV) and LWT's Laser Ltd, should Carsberg choose to adopt a hard line, divestment could eventually be on the cards. Perturbing, is it not, how a touch of Government deregulation can transform an industry almost overnight? At the least, it will be interesting to discover what the Government's White Paper on "competitiveness" — inspired by Heseltine — will eventually have to say on the subject of TV advertising. My reading is market forces: 3: competition 0.

Meanwhile, MAI's bid for Anglia, which signals an exit p/e ratio significantly North of 30, is



MELVYN MARCKUS

perceived as good news for LWT's shareholders. Granada's six-for-five share swap, taking Granada at 591p, values LWT at 709p, signalling an exit p/e of 24.9. A green light from Heseltine would have started the takeover clock ticking again and might have heralded a sweetener, conceivably over the next few days, from Granada. But, with the DTI lights no more than

amber, Granada will be in no hurry to tickle its terms: a perception which saw LWT's shares bow out of the week at 699p, with a recent premium replaced by a 10p discount.

Glamour from the TV sector: drama in the newspaper arena. Within a matter of days, possibly on Monday, Andreas Whitam Smith, founder of *The Independent*, is expected to attempt to usher in Mirror Group Newspapers as the would-be saviour of Newspaper Publishing.

Whitam Smith, along with founder shareholders and co-directors Adrian O'Neill and Matthew Symonds, speaks for some 10 per cent of Newspaper Publishing's equity and, in his quest for capital, has been working alongside La Repubblica and El Pais, the key European shareholders with a further 38 per cent stake, purchased at around £4 per share against a current market quote of nearer £1.50p.

Back at the City Road ranch,

Newspaper Publishing's board, led by chairman Ian Hay Davison and chief executive Patrick Morrissey, is intent on ensuring that any would-be rescuer starts off on the right foot, namely by offering the right price. With an eye to *The Guardian's* takeover of *The Observer* (a sensitive subject, bearing in mind that Newspaper Publishing was the rival suitor), the board's view is that the company's minimum value is £60 million, based on 75 per cent of an £80 million revenue. This suggests a perceived floor of £3 per share, significantly above the £2/£2.50p price which MGN is understood to favour. Newspaper Publishing is advised by Warburgs, the Whitam Smith camp by Schroders.

Meanwhile, Tony O'Reilly, chairman of the Irish Independent. Newspapers combine (which only a matter of weeks ago was talking about a reverse takeover of United Newspapers) remains seriously intent on

securing a 25 per cent/30 per cent stake. The Europeans have consistently argued that only a "Fleet Street house" possesses the muscle to salvage Newspaper Publishing — rumoured to be heading for an £8 million loss for 1993-94 — but word has it that O'Reilly's charm was well received during a recent tete a tete with the El Pais/La Repubblica camp.

News of a full-scale consortium bid for Newspaper Publishing is clearly imminent with El Pais/La Repubblica expected to take a 50 per cent plus stake. MGN representing close on 40 per cent and Whitam Smith & Co accounting for the rest. But a price of £2/£2.50p may well prompt Davison, and his colleagues to encourage counter bids. Which is why O'Reilly is understood to be actively searching for a partner: a favoured candidate being none other than Lord Hollick's MAI, busy absorbing Anglia but known to have shown earlier interest.

Watchdog encourages Gas's rivals

By Philip Bassett, Industrial Editor

INDEPENDENT gas companies might be able to take more of British Gas's customers than the limit set by the Government for the first stage of gas competition when the monopoly of household sales is ended. This was indicated by the gas industry regulator.

The independent companies have been eagerly awaiting signs of how they will be allowed to sign up British Gas customers when the household market is opened to competition in 1996. They believe customers who move from Gas could save up to a tenth on their annual bills.

Clare Spottiswoode, Director-General of Gas Supply, emphasised the importance of introducing competition in a way that caused least disruption to the domestic market. In her first important speech since taking over at Ofgas in November, she told a gas conference in London that Ofgas would next month bring forward, with the Department of Trade and Industry, a consultation document on the details of introducing competition in gas. This will flesh out the decision by Michael Heseltine, President of the Board of Trade, to end British Gas's monopoly of household supply, though the company will be allowed to keep its gas sales arm.

As part of the introduction of competition, independent suppliers will be allowed to sign up 5 per cent of Gas's 18

million household customers, on a first-come, first-served basis; a similar market share will be available in 1997.

In advance of the consultation paper, Ms Spottiswoode said that from April 1996, British Gas would each month publish the level competition had reached, so that "all competitors will... know how far aggregate competition has gone, and will make their own estimates of when the limit will be reached."

Because no further customer switching will be allowed in the month after the 5 per cent limit was surpassed, the final percentage "could well be significantly greater than 5 per cent", depending on how many customers switched in the final month.

The same procedure would be followed in 1997, and from April 1998, British Gas's transportation and storage arm would be expected to have information technology systems in place that could cope with full competition.

She described the joint consultation document as "quite a revolution". It would cover a broad range of issues, including tariffs, market points such as metering, safeguards for domestic customers and policing "cherry-picking" of choicer customers areas by independent.

She said it was crucial for the UK economy that the structure of the gas industry be got right.



Major Christo Philipson, left, the agency's chairman, and Peter Bickmore, managing director, at Newmarket

Japanese trade surplus grows to record \$120bn

FROM REUTERS IN JAPAN

JAPAN'S trade surplus grew to a record \$120.4 billion in 1993 after rising beyond economists' expectations in December. Imports grew by only 0.7 per cent in dollar terms, though they were 4.6 per cent up in volume. Exports rose by 6.1 per cent in December, to \$32.74 billion, but fell by 2.4 per cent in volume.

Economists said the surplus was likely to decline slowly this year, owing to the strong yen, which makes Japanese exports less competitive overseas, and a hoped-for domestic economic recovery.

A finance ministry official said the trade surplus should tend downwards. "In yen terms," he said, "the surplus has decreased slightly and

certain exports have decreased in number... it will depend on currency rates and the state of the global economy."

Commentators said the trade figures would increase tensions between the US and Japan, and could exert upward pressure on the yen.

Lloyd Benisen, the US Treasury Secretary, will stop over in Japan tomorrow and plans to meet Morihiro Hosokawa, the prime minister, and Hirofumi Fujii, the finance minister. Mr Benisen wants to increase pressure for progress in talks aimed at cutting Japan's surplus and improving access to its markets. Mr Hosokawa is scheduled to meet President Clinton on February 11 in Washington.

The British Bloodstock Agency (BBA), the thoroughbred horse dealer and insurer, cut its pre-tax losses to £213,000 (£311,000 loss) at half time (Martin Flanagan writes).

The result was due mainly to a continuing cost-cutting programme, and the directors said results should improve steadily in line with a strengthening international bloodstock market. The company said it remained market leader, having been the biggest buyer at each of the five main bloodstock sales in Britain and Ireland last year.

However, the BBA board issued a warning against expecting any big improvement in this year's results. In the six months to September 30, losses fell from 8.1p to 5.5p a share. The interim dividend is again passed.

BBA cuts losses and costs

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Zeneca reassures City on trading prospects

ZENECA, the pharmaceuticals business demerged from ICI last summer, has steadied City nerves with a trading statement that talks of a stronger profits performance despite the lack of any improvement in the company's markets. The group's shares reacted with a 10p jump to 818p.

Zeneca said since the interim figures for last year were published in July there had been "no significant change in trading conditions". Uncertainties had continued in many healthcare markets, the company said. While there had been gradual recoveries in America and Britain, most of Continental Europe remained depressed.

Despite this, Zeneca's trading performance in the second half of 1993 had improved, with all three sides of the group, pharmaceuticals, agrochemicals and specialties, contributing. In pharmaceuticals, sales were up in actual terms and at constant exchange rates, but the rate of growth for the full year was lower than in the first half.

Tempus, page 21

CU credit rating rises

COMMERCIAL Union, the UK insurance group, has had its commercial paper re-rated one notch from A-1 to A-1 Plus, the highest awarded by Standard & Poor's, the US credit rating agency. S&P accompanied its re-rating with a bullish view of CU's balance sheet, investment strategy and potential profits growth. The agency said CU, with shareholders' funds estimated at \$2.4 billion, benefits considerably from the "dependable earnings" of Delta Lloyd, its Dutch affiliate.

C&W in Caribbean link

CABLE and Wireless is linking with France Télécom and America's AT&T to lay a \$60 million fibre optic submarine cable system in the Caribbean. The British telecommunications company will initially take a two-thirds, \$40 million stake in the project, which will join 14 islands. The 1,730-kilometre cable is due to become operational early next year. France Télécom will have 18 per cent and AT&T 6 per cent, and there will be several minority shareholders.

Alan Paine acquired

ALAN Paine, the knitwear maker that went into administrative receivership in December, has been acquired through a newly-formed company, Alan Paine Knitwear Ltd, for £1.16 million. The new company is a 75 per cent subsidiary of Hickling Pentecost, the textile and industrial products concern, with the former Alan Paine management team holding the remaining 25 per cent stake. Most of the 200 people who lost their jobs have been re-employed.

SmithKline warrants

NATWEST Securities is issuing up to 50 million call warrants into SmithKline Beecham shares at 30p. NatWest concedes there has been high volatility in SB shares because of patent worries and that they trade at a 12 per cent discount. Short-term volatility is likely to stay high, NatWest says. However, brokers' forecasts suggest a compound earnings growth of just below 10 per cent over the decade. Exercise price is 480p. Two warrants exercise into one share.

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Writ for £15m Maxwell shares

By Patricia Tehan, Banking Correspondent

THE liquidators to the manager of the Maxwell company pension funds have issued a writ against Credit Suisse claiming recovery of £15 million worth of shares.

The shares were deposited in 1990 and 1991 with Credit Suisse as security for a £50 million facility provided to Robert Maxwell Group. Neil Cooper and Ipe Jacob, of Robson Rhodes, the joint liquidators of Bishopsgate Investment Management, said yesterday that they are seeking recovery of shares belonging to pension schemes that are part of a Common Investment Fund, a pooled fund that managed the pension fund assets.

They also seek damages for a limited number of shareholdings that had been held as security by Credit Suisse, but have been sold. These include 3 million shares in Henry Ansbacher, 1.1 million Quadrant Group shares, 800,000 Crown Communications shares and 725,000 James Wilkes shares. The only shares still held by Credit Suisse are ones in Tava

There was a loss of £917,000 last time. Gross rental income increased to £730,649 (£615,457). Majority of borrowing converted to longer-term. Last time's profit was £477,000. Turnover fell to £5.22m (£6.24m). Company is negotiating with a potential purchaser for Acrokol.

Final results. Investment income grew to £2.61m (£2.59m). The net asset value increased to 151.42p (124.38p) a share.

Final results. The net asset value rose to 203.76p (£155.95p) a share. Total income slipped to £2.99m (£3.22m).

Turnover slipped to £934,000 (£948,000). Profits were boosted by £25,000 of currency gains and £87,000 from sale of investments.

Pharmaceuticals, an Israeli pharmaceutical company. The liquidators issued a draft statement of claim to Credit Suisse last autumn. Negotiations are continuing.

Last year, the Mirror Group pension scheme filed a separate claim estimated at £15 million against Credit Suisse for assets provided as security for the same £50 million loan. The liquidators have announced recovery of shares worth £27 million from Lehman Brothers bank; it remains a further £81 million claim.

COMPANY NEWS IN BRIEF

CARDIFF PROPERTY (Fin)
Pre-tax: £119,000
EPS: 6.5p (LPS: 35.7p)
Div: 1.66p, mkg 2.50p

LPA INDUSTRIES (Fin)
Pre-tax: £86,000
EPS: 0.44p (3.53p)
Div: 0.9p, mkg 2.45p

MALVERN UK INDEX TST
Pre-tax: £2.34m (£2.44m)
EPS: 3.99p (3.77p)
Div: 2.30p, mkg 4p

SELECTIVE ASSETS TST
Pre-tax: £1.38m (£1.07m)
EPS: 3.72p (2.78p)
Div: 1.45p (1.20p)

SHIELD GROUP (Int)
Pre-tax: £5,000 (£54,000)
LPS: 3.2p (2.7p)
Div: None

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Clive Hollick's acquisition of Anglia TV was accomplished in characteristic fashion — with stealth, secrecy and painstaking attention to detail. Except there is one big difference on this occasion: he is playing for the highest stakes of his career. The question which now splits the City is has he paid too much in his eagerness for media might?

Business Focus — The Sunday Times tomorrow

CHIROSCEINCE

CHIROSCEINCE GROUP plc, one of the world's leading chiral technology companies specialising in the development of compounds for pharmaceutical applications, in particular the development of drug candidates with the potential for greater therapeutic benefit and reduced side effects, is seeking a listing on the London Stock Exchange.

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ACES LINE UP FOR TOP BRIDGE TITLE

The world's top bridge players, including Zia Mahmood, Omar Sharif and Marcelo Branco are gathering in London for The Macallen Malt Whisky International Bridge Pairs Championship 1994

Play is at The White House Hotel, Regents Park, from 7.30pm on January 26 to 9.15pm on January 28

Tickets to view, priced from £7.50 for half a day to £20 for all three days, are available from the English Bridge Union on 0296 394414

EUROTUNNEL: Sir Alastair Morton and Georges-Christian Chazot

New entente cordiale links past with future

partners in power

Sarah Bagnall tracks down the men who will oversee a switch of emphasis from traffic flows to cash flows as the tunnel opens

On May 6, Eurotunnel becomes a new company. After seven years, the phoney war will be officially over and the company's grand design will finally move from drawing board to track. With that comes a switch of emphasis from dealing with bankers, construction teams and governments to coping with customers. And, hopefully, droves of them.

Getting the tunnel project this far has been no mean feat. Its construction has been dogged by persistent disputes with contractors, £4 billion of cost overruns that lifted the total cost to £10 billion, and a consequent string of fund raisings. But by 1996, Eurotunnel hopes to attract 13 million passengers and the same number in tonnes of freight.

Enter Georges-Christian Chazot. Last week, he stepped into one of Sir Alastair Morton's well-worn shoes, taking over as Eurotunnel's chief executive and leaving Sir Alastair as co-chairman. The two men make a formidable pair.

Sir Alastair is a no-nonsense — blunt almost to the point of rudeness — man who does not suffer fools lightly. His charm is accompanied by thinly disguised acerbic undercurrents, he is tough in mind and body and has a keen sense of humour.

Over the seven years, all these qualities have been tested and retested. But he and Eurotunnel have survived and the tunnel's opening, nearly a year late, means he can now climb out of the driving seat, something he says he would like to have done earlier. "I made it clear to the board in spring 1992," says Sir Alastair, "that I would not wish to be chief executive when the tunnel opens because the company becomes a transport service company and that's a very different scene. I've grown up with Eurotunnel the other way and so it seemed a good time to make a change and also I am tired and want a break."

The search for a new chief executive started last June, through two headhunters, one in Paris and one in London. Paris came up trumps, bringing M Chazot to the attention of Sir Alastair and his co-chairman, André Benard, in late September.

ber. M Chazot, who gesticulates widely, punching the air with grand sweeps of his arms, fired the ball.

Sir Alastair says: "The job I and my fellow co-chairman have done for the last seven years is protect the interests of the 630,000 shareholders who have been very vulnerable to the contractors, the bankers and, to a significant degree, the governments. But once you open, the banks are not interested in the rate you spend money but the rate at which you get it in."

That process can only be done by someone with the necessary skills to wring out money from efficient running of the service. "So we needed someone from industry and commerce. Georges has run substantial increasingly successful industrial organisations all the way from product development through to the market place. My jobs, since leaving the World Bank, have all been start-ups and turnarounds," says Sir Alastair.

That M Chazot was an international businessman secured him the appointment. "We didn't want a Franco-Frenchman or an Anglo-Englishman," says Sir Alastair.

In fact, Sir Alastair was searching for someone whose background was similar to his own. Both men feel they are outsiders from their respective mother countries. Sir Alastair was born and raised in South Africa while M Chazot was born and raised in Algeria. And both men spent time in America. M Chazot, who says he was struck by this shared experience immediately, goes one step further, saying he does not really feel French.

However, he shares the nation's love of sailing, and spends two weeks every summer with his wife, an artist, cruising between La Rochelle on France's west coast and Brest, Brittany. He would like to sail across the Channel, a somewhat ironic desire for a man running a company catering for land lovers.

M Chazot says he was not deterred by Sir Alastair's reputation. "Knowing the kind of strain and the magnitude of the problems which were encountered in all those years, I'm not amazed that some, outburst could come from him." But he wasn't completely sure. He admits he



Sir Alastair Morton, left, and Georges-Christian Chazot speak the same language, whether French or English, when it comes to converting debts into dividends

checked his future boss out before agreeing to join. "I tested his reputation in-house. He has a reputation for being very straight and direct, which is very good. I like it," says M Chazot.

And he appears to have no problem with Sir Alastair's tendency to drive home his point, often bulldozing over other speakers in the process. As Sir Alastair says: "I tend to be the noisy one." M Chazot has no qualms about interjecting and correcting his boss, a point Sir Alastair slipping into French now and then to correct or check M Chazot's remarks. In true British style, Sir Alastair downplays his language skills, saying he speaks "enough" French to get by. But M Chazot is quick to point out it is "perfect" — proved by the fact that their second meeting, located in Paris, was conducted totally in French.

Both have a sense of humour, which clicks together with the help of the high

standard of the Frenchman's English, first learnt more than 30 years ago on a two-month trip to London and polished over the years in his role as international businessman. While Sir Alastair appears battle weary and somewhat jaded by his experience, M Chazot is fired up with fresh enthusiasm and vigour for the task ahead.

In part, he says, this is due to that part of his character which is French. "The tunnel appeals tremendously to the French mind. We love the grand project. We love the Concorde, the pyramide de Louvre and the grande bibliothèque, which we call the très grande bibliothèque." M Chazot is very hands on. On Tuesday, his second day in the job, he took a trip through the tunnel in the cab of a locomotive at 130kph because he felt it essential to get that kind of feel for the business. He will need such enthusiasm. For ahead of him lies the

formidable task of turning traffic flows into cash flows, while Sir Alastair tries to get the company on to a firmer financial footing.

Sir Alastair makes it clear where priorities lie. "The real job from now on is what is the chief executive going to do to make the company profitable," he says. A daunting task, given that Eurotunnel's interest bill alone is £1.6 million a day. But M Chazot acknowledges, and even appears to relish, the task. "It is an incredible challenge. We have on us a fairly substantial debt and a very very substantial amount of equity for which our bankers are waiting for interest payments and our shareholders are waiting for dividends."

So while the emphasis is on the future, the past must still be dealt with. Like the Roman deity Janus, Eurotunnel has two faces: one in the guise of Chazot, which is looking forward, and one, in the guise of Sir Alastair, which is looking backwards. Sir Alastair says: "We are moving from

needing a watchful, somewhat 'no you can't do that', person to a 'how can we be of service' person."

While Sir Alastair says he is "tired in body and in spirit", he is not likely to find much time to catch up on hours of lost sleep or learn how to relax again. Far from it. "We still have a claim for more than £1 billion outstanding from the contractors, we have another last £1 billion funding to do to pay for the cash flow deficit for a period after starting and we've got a big arbitration litigation outstanding against the two railways for a further £1 billion," says Sir Alastair. Those hurdles are his to clear.

But with a far away look in his eyes, he begins to dream of easier times. "We have solved four massive headaches and have three left. So my workload will go down as we solve the remaining problems." Taking on a project of this proportion has taken its toll, however, and Sir Alastair says he does not intend to embark on another such venture.

Cheap oil leaves Elf looking expensive on eve of sell-off

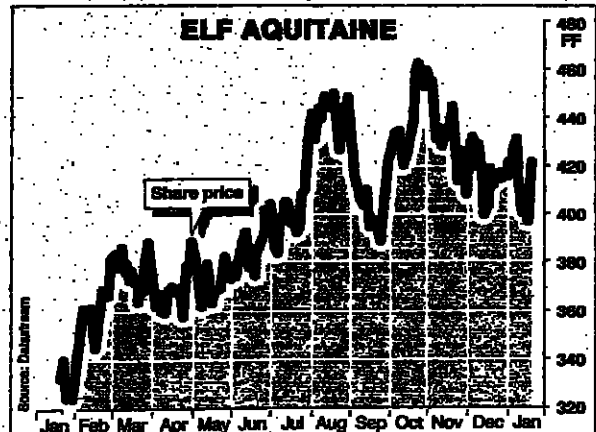
MANAGERS of privatised companies often find layers of profit that were hidden from their state-shackled predecessors. True to form, Philippe Jaffré, the new chairman of France's largest industrial company, wants to convince the markets that Elf Aquitaine is also a deep well of hidden wealth. And so far, he has done a good job of signalling a sharp change of direction.

This week's revelation that the oil company's profits tumbled last year from Fr6.2 billion to just over Fr1 billion was a poor advertisement for the imminent Fr35 billion sale of the government's holding. But the figures contained more than Fr2 billion of provisions relating to the writedown of North Sea assets and against the restructuring of the chemicals division.

In addition, financial assets are to be sold and investment in oil and gas exploration is to be cut from this year's projected Fr14 billion to Fr10 billion in 1995. Belatedly, Elf is following its British and American peers in pulling back from past expansionist policies. To be fair to Elf, it diversified later than others and more successfully, avoiding the disastrous adventures in mining and metals of other oil giants.

Instead, Elf put money into healthcare and beauty products businesses that maintained their operating return at Fr1.9 billion last year, as Elf's own operating income plummeted from Fr12 billion to Fr9.5 billion.

But Elf cannot escape the miseries of the oil sector. With about two thirds of its income generated from exploration and production, Elf is highly geared to the oil price. The company is betting on \$16 to \$18 a barrel for this year, an optimistic scenario that could generate pre-ex-



ceptional profits of Fr4.4 billion or Fr16.9 per share. But every \$1 fall in the price will cut the per share figure by Fr3. Without a very heavy discount on the current share price, investors in the sell-off will be taking a lot on faith.

Zeneca
ZENECA's trading statement, at the end of its financial year, and six months after denierger, may be little more than a hand-holding exercise for the City and largely missing any key financials, but it has proved a reassuring one for some analysts: witness the 10p jump in the shares that was sparked by such an anodyne announcement.

At least one securities house had become disenchanted with Zeneca from the back of bad news from the American pharmaceuticals industry, largely down to widespread destocking, which culminated in disappointing fourth-quarter sales figures from Pfizer.

By contrast, Zeneca has seen rising pharmaceuticals volumes of about 5 or 6 per cent that will help a second-half performance otherwise flattened by changes in exchange rates since the start of the half, the market believes.

because of growth of Russian exports to the West. Russian exports increased by 60 per cent last year, as the country drove its plants hard to earn dollars. Between 1 and 2 million tonnes need to be taken out of the system to restore some equilibrium to supply and demand.

Despite the gloom in Brussels, the share market wants to believe that production will be cut: stocks such as Alcan enjoyed a rise of 35 per cent last year. World demand for aluminium is increasing, with good news from key indicators such as American housing and car sales.

Agreement in Brussels will be costly: Russia wants the West to cut back in equal measure while North American and European producers are loath to subsidise Russian capacity. The likely outcome is independent reductions in output from private sector producers while state-subsidised plants in Russia, Europe and elsewhere support jobs locally.

N. Leisure

IF ALL else fails, change your name. It is working well for Northern Leisure, which ploughed an unhappy furrow until late last year as Whitegate Leisure and is the vehicle of Nick Oppenheim, a name of distinctly 1980s flavour. The change of name coincided with a classic business school financial restructuring by Mr Oppenheim that cut out murderous debts, but at the expense of existing shareholders.

The shares have been moving straight up this year as the company starts to court the City. Northern is trading well and profitably, but long-term may need fresh funds from the market. Until then, at least, the shares can reasonably expect to be viewed favourably while any further restructuring takes place.

Aluminium

ATTEMPTS to manipulate commodity prices generally fail and the delegates at the aluminium conference in Brussels may find some small comfort in remembering that their consins in the chemical industry were unable last year to agree cuts in ethylene production, while Opoc still flounders in a rising tide of oil.

Aluminium prices are low

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LOAN MOANS 25

Borrowers protest at unfair rates

WEEKEND MONEY

GRANNY RIVALS 23

Building societies come back with better rates



Banks bow to power of customers

Banks and building societies are gearing up for another attempt to persuade their customers that they are not as bad as everyone thinks. This spring will see the implementation of a new code of banking practice, setting out to customers how they should expect to be treated by banks and what rights they have.

Trade associations representing banks and building societies are still working on the new code, which will be published as early as next month. It will then and be implemented, perhaps as early as the end of March. Some banks have already made changes, realising they will have to anyway. Barclays is the latest to announce changes to the way it communicates charges to personal customers in advance of the code's implementation.

Since the existing code was implemented in March 1992, banks have been harshly criticised by consumer groups, the Office of Fair Trading and the Data Protection Registrar for the literal way some have interpreted it. Work started on a revised code almost as soon as the ink was dry on the first. This was itself a revision of a previous draft thrown out by customers and consumer groups who said it seemed to protect banks' rights and not those of customers.

Like the existing code, the new version will promise that banks will explain the terms and conditions of their accounts, give details of charges and interest at any time and

Sara McConnell says banks have been forced to revise their code of practice by angry customers

inform of changes, explain the customer complaints procedure and not circulate details of customers to other companies within the banking group except with the express consent of the customer.

A second code is needed to plug conspicuous holes in some places and be more specific in others, so that no bank adhering to the code can avoid its responsibilities.

Banks are expected to commit themselves to pre-notifying customers who go overdrawn without permission that they will incur charges. Customers will then have time to move funds into their accounts and avoid charges, putting them further in the red.

The existing code only says that banks will disregard charges if they are incurred solely because a previous set of charges has pushed them into the red. To their credit, TSB, National Westminster, Halifax Building Society and Bank of Scotland already go beyond the code and prenotify, overdrawn customers in this way and Lloyds is planning to do

so in the second quarter of this year. Barclays, previously one of the most reluctant, has this week announced it will prenotify personal customers, a change which will cost it £12 million, but has not set a date. Previously it maintained its customers did not want to be pre-notified. The Midland, the other laggard in this area, is still reviewing its position.

The new code is also expected to spell out more precisely how a bank must obtain permission of customers before passing on names and addresses to other companies within its group. This is an area where banks have been most heavily criticised for breaking their own rules. At the moment, many customers give consent without realising it.

Barclays customers buying any financial service automatically give permission for their names to go to other parts of the bank. Midland assumes customers have consented but will ask them for express consent from March.

Lloyds does better than its rivals on this. Only customers who sign a form specifically asking for consent will be considered to have given it. Originally people not replying were considered not to have given their consent but now the bank has redesigned the form so that people can write and say they have specifically not consented. NatWest says it does not hand on details of customers from a branch to any subsidiary and therefore will not be affected.



Anne Hayes took on National Westminster over its discourteous treatment when her First Reserve card was retained in a cashpoint machine

Liz Dolan talks to customers who feel they have had cause for complaint

High street banks may claim to be trying hard to improve customer relations, but complaints continue. Anne Hayes, a National Westminster account holder, is concerned about her bank's apparent inability to communicate sensibly.

Last year, her First Reserve card was swallowed by a cash machine. Her bank advised her to reapply. The application was rejected because it did not meet "the criteria for issue" and she was asked to reapply in three months. Asked to what "criteria" it referred, the bank said it thought the account was dormant. She says she uses it "once or twice every two months" and tops it up regularly. Only after she protested was she given a new card.

"So, why the discourteous letter?" she asks. NatWest says: "We obviously made a series of mistakes. The card would have been retained because there was something wrong with it, but she should have been sent a new one automatically. Our records do not show why she wasn't. We are writing to her to apologise". In another case, Simon

and Harriet Hewitt transferred two accounts, each containing £25, from the Halifax to another building society in January 1992 after they discovered from the radio that the Halifax planned to impose quarterly charges of £250 on balances below £50.

They then discovered that, six months earlier, the Halifax had also abolished interest payments on balances below £50. On no occasion were they told. They contend that the society had no right to stop paying interest to existing savers, however small, because that would break the

terms under which the accounts were opened. The case went to the building societies ombudsman. Before the result the Halifax offered an ex gratia payment. This was rejected because the Hewitts wanted a definitive judgment. However, once the money had been offered, the ombudsman refused to continue with the case.

The Halifax says that existing customers are now individually notified of new charges, but admits that all other information is normally only available in branches, or press advertisements. "We do

not consider we have behaved unfairly or that the regulations for the accounts are not enforceable," it says.

On another occasion, the Rev John Cutter claims that he and his wife were badly misled when staff at Lloyds bank advised them to open an Extra Interest Account in 1988. He says it was made clear that the account, held in trust, was intended to build up over a number of years, with dividends added. In March 1988, when the base rate was 9 per cent, the account paid 6.7 per cent. When the Cutters checked four years later, they

discovered that, although the base rate had risen to 10 per cent, the "extra interest" account was paying 1 per cent because it had been closed to new customers. Mr Cutter feels Lloyds has betrayed his trust. He is particularly annoyed by the bank's explanation that "since January 1990, the base rate has come down by 9 per cent and interest rates paid to savers have reflected this reduction." The writer of this letter must have been fully aware that base rates were actually 1 per cent higher than they had been when the account was opened, he says.



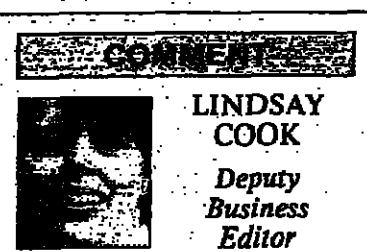
Simon Hewitt, with sons Gregory and Timothy, tried for an ombudsman's ruling on the Halifax

No bond with genteel poor

Pensioners waiting for more than a month for details of the new savings bond must feel pretty disappointed now. It was promised as an answer to their prayers on the fall in their income from building society and bank accounts, but the rate of 7 per cent gross — but not tax-free — can be more than achieved in any high street, or by post, on sums invested over five years by any adult in a tax exempt special savings account. Those who rushed into Tassas in January 1991 are feeling pretty bitter about being trapped in the five year savings account now that their returns have halved. But they do at least pay no tax on the interest, unlike grannies and grandpas in the pensioners bond who are over the tax threshold. The investment limit for the bonds is — at £20,000 — higher than the £9,000 for Tassas but low enough not to cause building societies too much concern. Those with substantial sums to invest can get 7 per cent from societies and withdraw at short notice.

Building societies will not worry if they lose a few thousand investors just above the £500 savings threshold for the account. They estimate that they are worth to administer a granny or grandpa with a few hundred pounds has little further sales potential.

But while the Government may have avoided a confrontation with the societies which could have led to higher inflationary mortgage rates just as tax increases are hitting pay slips, it has not addressed the problems of the genteel poor. These are the people who saved up



LINDSAY COOK
Deputy Business Editor

all their working lives in the expectation that they could live on the income that their capital would produce.

They have seen savings rates more than halved in the past three years on the top tiers and absolutely savaged on the lower tiers. Pensioners have had to chip away at their capital every month to pay bills that appear to be constantly rising ahead of inflation. Those bills will rise even more as value-added tax is added to heating bills.

The societies were barely able to conceal their glee when the details of the "granny bond" were announced on Thursday, the same day the Government chose to announce a review of their wholesale funding limit.

Societies are currently limited to borrowing up to 40 per cent of their funding through the wholesale markets — the rest has to come from savers. The fear that too much of savers' money was going to flow out to the "granny bond" was what might have concentrated the Government's mind at this point.

After all, the societies have been arguing for a relaxation of the funding rule for more than two years. Last time a

new National Savings bond was launched, the Government had an embarrassing climbdown when the Cheltenham & Gloucester forced it to cut the bond rate or risk a mortgage rate increase. Of course, pensioners can also boost government funding into the bargain.

Tackling rogues

More than 1,000 companies have been barred from selling investments by the Financial Intermediaries Managers and Brokers Regulatory Association in the past five years or so. Many more have left the industry just ahead of the boot.

Just how many of their employees, including a fair number of rogues, have crossed the road and joined the staff or become tied agents of another investment group regulated by a different authority we will never know.

From the summer, though, an attempt is being made to cut down the number of times that financial delinquents can rip off investors. The Investment Management Regulatory Organisation published its consultative document this week on individual registration. From the summer, individual staff members of investment management groups can be banned or fined. The change will come as the Personal Investment Authority takes over from Fimbra. Investors must hope that the PIA, with the strength of its public interest-dominated board, will turn away a few more rogues than Fimbra did at its launch.

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*Source: AITC. Share price total return to 31.08.93. †Source: AITC M.I.S. 09.93.

Robert Miller examines a new bank push for student customers



Adults are more likely to get divorced than change their bank, which is why Barclays is targeting students

Barclays is to make an aggressive push to increase its share of the student banking market next month. They are launching a poster campaign asking students if they are happy with their existing bank or whether they would like to switch.

Banks in general have decided that the student banking market is one area in which they could expect to expand further. Most have accepted that once adults join the working population, they are more likely to get divorced than change their banks.

Traditionally, the banks unveil their annual student packages in May or June, before the new academic year, with a range of incentives for opening an account such as cash gifts, payable when the first grant cheque is deposited, and an interest-free overdraft facility — usually up to £400.

Students' overdraft limits can be higher and the interest charged on them is generally at a preferential rate such as 1 per cent over the prevailing bank base rate. Student customers, who enjoy free banking facilities, can also apply for cheque guarantee cards up to £100.

Barclays' break with tradition will spark a fierce response from its main competitors such as NatWest, Lloyds, Midland and the Royal Bank of Scotland. Students

Bankers of the future

are known to be relatively mobile customers, but this is the first time that such an open poaching campaign has been launched midway through the academic year.

Beverley Gibbon, Barclays youth market manager, explains: "We will be displaying posters in branches and on campuses saying that if students want to switch their bank accounts we would like them to have a chat with our student business officers. I'm sure that all our competitors are looking to take away second and third-year stu-

dents from other banks. If the student already has an overdraft, we will consider taking it over on an individual basis. Once the next grant cheque is paid into the account, we will give the student a £10 record voucher."

Barclays has a 28 per cent share of the student market, compared with NatWest's 37 per cent, Midland's 23 per cent and Lloyds' 15 per cent.

Mike Siddons, marketing services director of Midland Bank, says: "In any given academic year, there are more than half a million students, so

naturally it is a very important market. We will clearly respond to the post campaign."

Greig McCallum, head of money transmission at loans, at the Royal Bank of Scotland argues: "Students are more perceptive. They are into chopping and changing their accounts just for the sake of vouchers. They want banks to treat them as responsible adults they are. However, we will defend our customer base vigorously."

Mike Smith, senior manager of personal banking at NatWest, says: "It is debatable whether students can really be tempted to switch banks for £10 record vouchers. If we respond, we would certainly try to be more innovative."

A more worrying factor is the banks' possibility that the more astute students now seek to exploit the bank enthusiasm for their custom and open new accounts each year. Until now, incentive have been on offer only to first year students.

Mr Smith says: "It is an inescapable fact that students are getting deeper into debt. But, until now, there has been some form of control over it. Market in that students generally had only one bank account. If this latest move were to be the start of student having multiple accounts, believe it would be a very serious development."

STUDENT AND GRADUATE ACCOUNTS

	Incentive	Interest if in credit	Free Banking?	Interest free O/D
Barclays	£10 Record Voucher	1%	Yes	£400
Lloyds	£10 Young Persons rail card	1%	Yes	£400
Midland	£25	2.99%	Yes	£400
NatWest	£25	2%	Yes	£400
Royal Bank of Scotland	—	0.25% ^a	Yes ^c	£400 1st year only
TSB	Cinema tickets and 3.5% discount vouchers	3.5%	Yes	£400

^a - Rates to £500 in year 3 ^b - Rate based on ^c - Unauthorised Overdraft incurs transaction charges ^d - Source: Moneyfacts

BRIEFINGS

The Nationwide building society is offering two mortgages fixed for two years. One rate, for first time buyers, is 5.85 per cent (an annual percentage rate of 7.7 per cent). The other, for all borrowers is 5.99 per cent (7.8 per cent APR).

The building society has withdrawn its rate of 5.25 per cent for first time buyers and 5.5 per cent for other borrowers. There is an arrangement fee of between £95 and £300 for taking out the fixed rate.

Anyone taking out a Nationwide mortgage will qualify for a free mortgage valuation and £250 cashback once they have bought their home.

Scottish Provident has changed the way it declares the bonuses on its life and pensions policies. It now has different rates for the sum assured and for existing bonuses, rather than its former flat rate. The annual bonus for endowments will be 4 per cent of the sum assured and 6 per cent of existing bonuses, compared with a uniform rate of 5.2 per cent declared in 1992. Annual bonus rates on pensions will be 5 per cent of basic benefit and 7.5 per cent of existing bonuses compared with 7 per cent of all benefits declared in 1992.

A guide to the growing number of factory shopping outlets which offer discounts on items including clothes, furniture, electrical appliances and food and drink has been published. The Official Great British Factory Shop Guide lists factory shopping outlets in the UK and includes full page maps to help people track them down. It costs £14.99 from bookshops.

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Newcastle takes on 'the granny'

Newcastle Building Society responded to the announcement that the National Savings Pensioners Guaranteed Income Bond will pay 7 per cent gross and raised the rate on its Nova Select account to 7.5 per cent gross annually, or 7.2 per cent for monthly income. The minimum investment is £5,000, and the maximum is £300,000. The variable rate is

guaranteed not to fall below 6 per cent gross.

Other societies are expected to compete, although some accounts already offer returns as good or better. According to Chase de Vere, the independent advisers, the Hinckley and Rugby building society tax exempt special savings account (Tessa) pays 7.75 per cent gross on £3,000.

The pensioners' bond will

pay 7 per cent gross per year guaranteed for five years with interest paid monthly to a bank or post office account. It is only for those 65 and over. Investors cashing in early must give 60 days' notice and lose 60 days' interest during it. Savers can obtain a prospectus and an application form by calling 0500 500 000.

SARA MCCONNELL

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Central lenders put on the pressure

Mortgage costs can vary greatly. Lenders cite the risk factor, but one client is angry. Jill Insley reports

George Bell, an independent financial adviser, believes he has paid £2,000 over the odds for his mortgage in the past year. National Home Loans has charged him 10.49 per cent interest on his £80,000 loan since last March while the Halifax Building Society, Britain's biggest lender, charged its borrowers 7.99 per cent.

National Home Loans is one of the "central lenders" that raise money from wholesale money markets (banks, pension funds and other investors) and sell the loans to raise further money.

When base rates are low, building societies must balance interest from borrowers against interest paid to retail investors. Central lenders, with no retail investors to consider, can be highly competitive.

When base rates rise, as in the early 1990s, building societies can afford to subsidise borrowers at the expense of investors. Borrowers with central lenders are exposed to the full costs of borrowing on wholesale money markets.

Many central lenders have stopped lending, and are trying to claw back some losses by charging high rates. NHL was launched in 1986 with innovative loans, including self-certified, 100 per cent and deferred-interest mortgages. The company ran into funding problems in 1991, and has not sold mortgages since, but it still has 45,000 borrowers and plans to resume lending soon.

Mr Bell says NHL should first cut its standard variable interest rate to come in line with most lenders, and refund

to borrowers the extra sum they have paid in the past two years. He believes that many NHL clients, including several whom he introduced to the company, are unable to remortgage to another lender because they cannot afford remortgaging costs or because their home's value has fallen below their loan.

He says: "They are using us as their tool to turn the company around. I would rather the company went into liquidation."

Lender	Interest rate (%)
National Home Loan	9.9
NHL remortgages	10.49
Mortgage Express	8.45
Mortgage Corporation	8.25
Skipston	7.9
Bristol & West	7.89

ation because then my mortgage would be taken over by another lender and charged at a standard rate."

James Fuller, a spokesman for NHL, says that it will reduce interest on standard variable endowment mortgages from 9.99 per cent to 9.45 per cent at the start of February, and remortgage interest rates will fall from 10.49 per cent to 9.99 per cent. Repayment mortgage rates will drop from 10.24 per cent to 9.74 per cent, and repayment remortgage rates from 10.74 per cent to 10.24 per cent.

Mr Fuller agrees that because NHL's loan book was built up during high house-

price inflation, many NHL borrowers now have negative equity. This increase risk to the lender, reflected by high interest rates. Mr Fuller says: "A lot of our borrowers have a great deal of unsecured loan as part of their mortgage. If you look at unsecured lending rates, I bet it would be a lot more than 9.49 per cent."

NHL is gradually reducing the gap between its rates and other lenders, Mr Fuller says. However, he adds: "People forget that when they came to us, there was a reason. Perhaps the Halifax wouldn't give them a mortgage."

NHL is not the only lender to charge high rates. Mortgage Express will cut its standard variable rate from 8.45 per cent to 8.1 on February 4. The TSB, its parent, is charging 7.64 per cent. A spokesman says: "The rate is slightly higher because Mortgage Express does a different class of lending to a borrower who represents a high risk."

The Mortgage Corporation charges many of its clients 8.25 per cent. Julian Palmer, head of marketing, says that its rates vary with risk, and plans no cuts in the near future. Borrowers who have paid on the dot for three years and bought redundancy insurance enjoy a rate of 7.4 per cent.

Some building societies charge much more than the Halifax, in spite of having a smaller proportion of high-risk borrowers. Bristol & West standard variable rate is 7.99 per cent. Jenny Redman, a spokesman, says: "We set a rate enabling us to be fair to savers and borrowers."



George Bell thinks NHL should cut its rate to come in line with other lenders

Vary your mortgage rate to save years of paying

A fundamental change is taking place in the mortgage market. Gone is the 1980s attitude when borrowers were prepared to pile up huge debts based on their homes and pay it off at 65. Today many people want to pay off their debt well before then, leaving at least five years in which to make better provision for retirement. And they do not want to be penalised for shortening their mortgage term.

This week Yorkshire Bank tapped into that mood with a "flexible payment mortgage plan". On the most optimistic forecast, the bank estimates a borrower with a £70,000 mortgage could save more than £27,000 and seven years.

David Rozby, Yorkshire Bank's product manager, says: "Right at the start we provide customers with as

much information as possible so that they understand the benefits of small rises in their annual repayments. Using a special programme we can illustrate the impact of those rises over the term of the mortgage and by how much it can be shortened." The fee when the loan is granted is £150 and legal costs are £103.

Repayments are based on the bank's variable mortgage rate, currently 7.65 per cent and can be made not only monthly, but also weekly or fortnightly. More importantly, lump-sum payments of any amount can be made at any time and will be deducted immediately. There is no fee.

This is in sharp contrast to most lenders which only credit over-payments once a year, leaving the lump sum earning no interest whatsoever and, not making any difference to

the level of that year's mortgage repayments.

Ian Darby, a director of Jon Charcol, the independent mortgage broker, believes many more of these new style mortgages will soon be available.

He added both Citibank and UCB Home Loans offer similar deals to Yorkshire Bank's. Citibank's Equity Builder allows for minimum monthly overpayments of £50 on both variable and fixed-rate mortgages. Term Master from UCB Home Loans has a similar overpayment amount but only available on its standard variable mortgage rate of 7.49 per cent. UCB payments can be changed each month with three days' notice but for a £25 fee. Both credit overpayments immediately.

ROBERT MILLER

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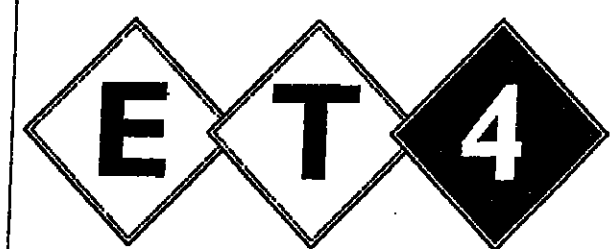
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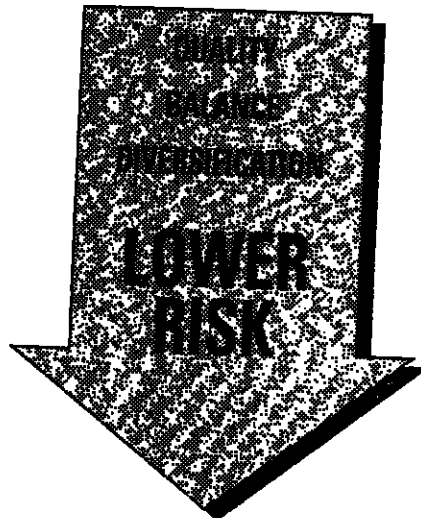
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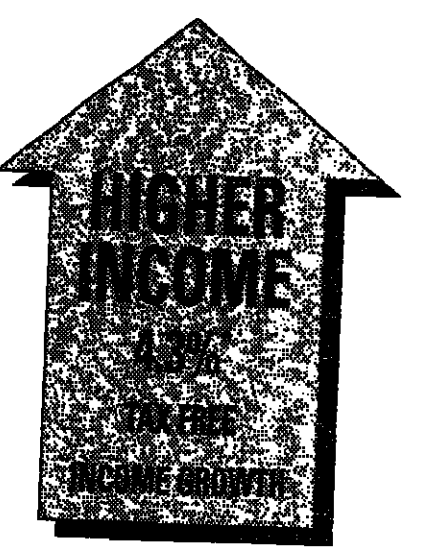
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THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

Source: Firstst
* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); † Ex dividend; ‡ Middle.

Earlier gains halved

1993/94		Price		Net Yield		PIE
High	Low	(p)	(p)	+/-	%	
524	345	Abbey Hill	508	-7	11.8	29.1
314	179	Allies Irish	204	-1	2.0	13.6
330	131	Abbey View 2	267	+26	3.7	3.7
565	365	Warrington 1	503	-1	1.0	1.0
495	330	Yorkshire Canal	453	-	-	21.9
535	330	Yorkshire Canal	453	-	-	21.9
499	330	Yorkshire Canal	453	-	-	21.9

1990/91 High Low Company		Price	%	Net	Yld	P/E	1990/91 High Low Company		Price	%	Net	Yld	P/E	1990/91 High Low Company		Price	%	Net	Yld	P/E	
			+	-						+	-						+	-			
363	432	Cummins	399	8	10.4	3.6	11	32	62	18	3	12.5	21	142	137	3	10.5	3.5	11	32	
364	433	Deere	399	8	10.4	3.6	11	32	62	18	3	12.5	21	142	137	3	10.5	3.5	11	32	
411	455	General	402	11	4.1	11.8	10	11	32	62	18	3	12.5	21	142	137	3	10.5	3.5	11	32
230	252	Int'l Steel	232	1	3.0	10.0	10	11	32	62	18	3	12.5	21	142	137	3	10.5	3.5	11	32
230	252	Int'l Steel	232	1	3.0	10.0	10	11	32	62	18	3	12.5	21	142	137	3	10.5	3.5	11	32
230	252	Int'l Steel	232	1	3.0	10.0	10	11	32	62	18	3	12.5	21	142	137	3	10.5	3.5	11	32
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46	W. H. H. H. H.	44	11.3	14	23.4
47	W. H. H. H. H.	45	11.3	14	23.4
48	W. H. H. H. H.	46	11.3	14	23.4
49	W. H. H. H. H.	47	11.3	14	23.4
50	W. H. H. H. H.	48	11.3	14	23.4
51	W. H. H. H. H.	49	11.3	14	23.4
52	W. H. H. H. H.	50	11.3	14	23.4
53	W. H. H. H. H.	51	11.3	14	23.4
54	W. H. H. H. H.	52	11.3	14	23.4
55	W. H. H. H. H.	53	11.3	14	23.4
56	W. H. H. H. H.	54	11.3	14	23.4
57	W. H. H. H. H.	55	11.3	14	23.4
58	W. H. H. H. H.	56	11.3	14	23.4
59	W. H. H. H. H.	57	11.3	14	23.4
60	W. H. H. H. H.	58	11.3	14	23.4
61	W. H. H. H. H.	59	11.3	14	23.4
62	W. H. H. H. H.	60	11.3	14	23.4
63	W. H. H. H. H.	61	11.3	14	23.4
64	W. H. H. H. H.	62	11.3	14	23.4
65	W. H. H. H. H.	63	11.3	14	23.4
66	W. H. H. H. H.	64	11.3	14	23.4
67	W. H. H. H. H.	65	11.3	14	23.4
68	W. H. H. H. H.	66	11.3	14	23.4
69	W. H. H. H. H.	67	11.3	14	23.4
70	W. H. H. H. H.	68	11.3	14	23.4
71	W. H. H. H. H.	69	11.3	14	23.4
72	W. H. H. H. H.	70	11.3	14	23.4
73	W. H. H. H. H.	71	11.3	14	23.4
74	W. H. H. H. H.	72	11.3	14	23.4
75	W. H. H. H. H.	73	11.3	14	23.4
76	W. H. H. H. H.	74	11.3	14	23.4
77	W. H. H. H. H.	75	11.3	14	23.4
78	W. H. H. H. H.	76	11.3	14	23.4
79	W. H. H. H. H.	77	11.3	14	23.4
80	W. H. H. H. H.	78	11.3	14	23.4
81	W. H. H. H. H.	79	11.3	14	23.4
82	W. H. H. H. H.	80	11.3	14	23.4
83	W. H. H. H. H.	81	11.3	14	23.4
84	W. H. H. H. H.	82	11.3	14	23.4
85	W. H. H. H. H.	83	11.3	14	23.4
86	W. H. H. H. H.	84	11.3	14	23.4
87	W. H. H. H. H.	85	11.3	14	23.4
88	W. H. H. H. H.	86	11.3	14	23.4
89	W. H. H. H. H.	87	11.3	14	23.4
90	W. H. H. H. H.	88	11.3	14	23.4
91	W. H. H. H. H.	89	11.3	14	23.4
92	W. H. H. H. H.	90	11.3	14	23.4
93	W. H. H. H. H.	91	11.3	14	23.4
94	W. H. H. H. H.	92	11.3	14	23.4
95	W. H. H. H. H.	93	11.3	14	23.4
96	W. H. H. H. H.	94	11.3	14	23.4
97	W. H. H. H. H.	95	11.3	14	23.4
98	W. H. H. H. H.	96	11.3	14	23.4
99	W. H. H. H. H.	97	11.3	14	23.4
100	W. H. H. H. H.	98	11.3	14	23.4

144	37 1/2 Mid South Coast	60	-	-	20.6	52	44 Fisher	77	-	-	-
145	40 1/2 Cal & Oreg	50	-	-	20.6	53	45 Gulf	78	-	-	-
146	30 Independent	50	-	-	23.7	54	22 Jacobs	81	0.5	1.3	-
147	30 1/2 Western Trans	50	-	-	23.7	55	47 Inlet States	82	-	-	-
148	30 1/2 Western Trans	50	-	-	23.7	56	48 Inlet States	83	-	-	-
149	33 1/2 Maral Retail	45	-	-	8.2	20 1/2	23 Marry Davis	84	-	-	-
150	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	24 Marry Davis	85	-	-	-
151	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	25 Marry Davis	86	-	-	-
152	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	26 Marry Davis	87	-	-	-
153	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	27 Marry Davis	88	-	-	-
154	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	28 Marry Davis	89	-	-	-
155	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	29 Marry Davis	90	-	-	-
156	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	30 Marry Davis	91	-	-	-
157	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	31 Marry Davis	92	-	-	-
158	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	32 Marry Davis	93	-	-	-
159	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	33 Marry Davis	94	-	-	-
160	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	34 Marry Davis	95	-	-	-
161	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	35 Marry Davis	96	-	-	-
162	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	36 Marry Davis	97	-	-	-
163	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	37 Marry Davis	98	-	-	-
164	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	38 Marry Davis	99	-	-	-
165	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	39 Marry Davis	100	-	-	-
166	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	40 Marry Davis	101	-	-	-
167	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	41 Marry Davis	102	-	-	-
168	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	42 Marry Davis	103	-	-	-
169	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	43 Marry Davis	104	-	-	-
170	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	44 Marry Davis	105	-	-	-
171	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	45 Marry Davis	106	-	-	-
172	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	46 Marry Davis	107	-	-	-
173	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	47 Marry Davis	108	-	-	-
174	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	48 Marry Davis	109	-	-	-
175	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	49 Marry Davis	110	-	-	-
176	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	50 Marry Davis	111	-	-	-
177	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	51 Marry Davis	112	-	-	-
178	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	52 Marry Davis	113	-	-	-
179	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	53 Marry Davis	114	-	-	-
180	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	54 Marry Davis	115	-	-	-
181	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	55 Marry Davis	116	-	-	-
182	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	56 Marry Davis	117	-	-	-
183	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	57 Marry Davis	118	-	-	-
184	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	58 Marry Davis	119	-	-	-
185	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	59 Marry Davis	120	-	-	-
186	30 1/2 Western Trans	45	-	-	20 1/2	400	60 Marry Davis	121	-	-	-

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0136

Beaumont has extra security at Haydock for his Gold Cup winner

Guarded optimism surrounds Jodami

Peter Beaumont remains mystified by Jodami's poor run at Chepstow. Julian Muscat reports

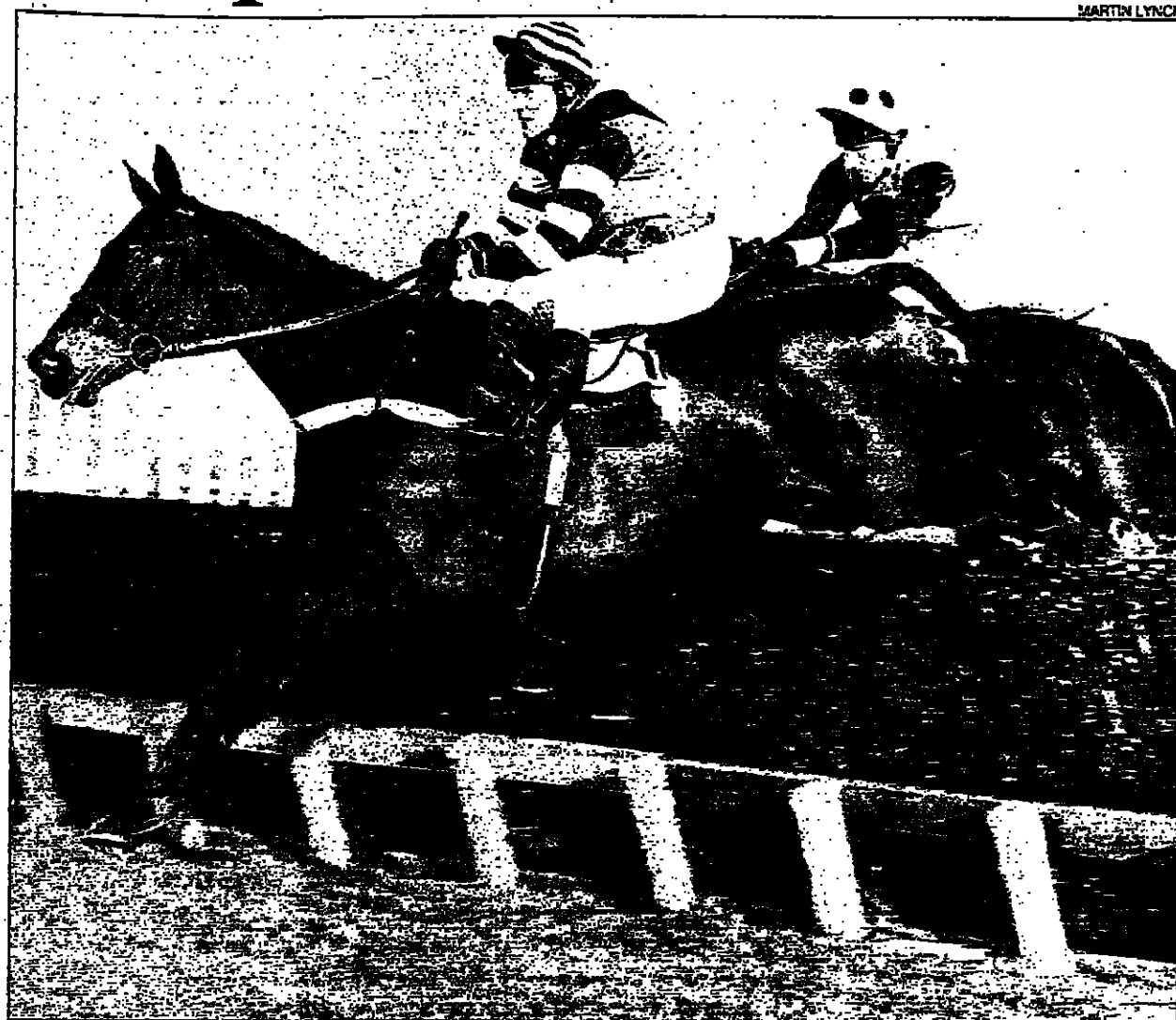
Peter Beaumont is taking no chances this time. After a strangely subdued performance at Chepstow last month, Jodami, the trainer's Cheltenham Gold Cup winner, will be closely attended by Beaumont's stable staff when he makes his reappearance in the Peter Marsh Chase at Haydock Park today.

These extra security precautions have been drawn up in the wake of Jodami's performance in the Rehearsal Chase seven weeks ago. On that occasion the nine-year-old jumping lacked its usual zest and he laboured home, exhausted, behind Party Politics and Riverside Boy. Beaumont has never unearthed a satisfactory explanation: he doubts he ever will.

Although the stable was, at the time, plagued by a bacterial infection, Jodami remained free of the visible symptoms displayed by others in Beaumont's care. "He tested clear of anything before," Chepstow," Beaumont said. "Even on the morning of the race, when I had him out of his box, he was his usual self. But in the pre-race ring he was a bit quiet. Then he stood quiet to be saddled; he's not normally like that."

These suspicious portents continued when Jodami's jockey, Mark Dwyer, noticed him blowing unusually hard after the gentlest of hacks to the start. Dwyer, who has built up a successful association with Jodami, later reported the horse never felt right in the race itself.

For all the signs of skulduggery, Beaumont, to his credit, refused to publicise what played on his mind. Even now,



Jodami goes on a retrieving mission at Haydock today after finishing distressed at Chepstow

seven weeks later, he is unwilling to elaborate. "There's no point in going into it," he insisted. "We will be taking precautions. It makes sense; these things do happen. I just hope, whatever it is, it hasn't left any lasting mark on the horse."

The circumstances of that Chepstow reverse came as something of a rude awakening to Jodami's connections, who had enjoyed a run of

unbroken success with the horse they bought in Ireland as a scarcely-broken four-year-old. Away from the crowds, at their farm on the fringes of the Yorkshire wolds, the Beaumont family dreamed for fully two years about a Gold Cup victory.

They had backed Jodami to win the 1993 Blue Riband before the horse ever jumped a fence in public, probably with the proceeds of his victory in a

Kelso bumper 12 months earlier. "We weren't so sure about the Gold Cup," Beaumont said. "But we knew he was going to win his bumper." His daughter, Anthea, holidayed in Barbados on some of the proceeds.

Beaumont's skill with horses was well known in point-to-point circles before his owners persuaded him to take out a trainer's licence in 1986. Before then, horses like Sporting

Luck, a winner 20 times between the flags, had long hinted what Beaumont, given the chance, was capable of achieving under Rules.

His ambition is plainly evident even though it is hidden behind the facade of the bluff Yorkshireman who will not reveal the acreage at his Fowls Farm. This is a family show in which Anthea, the apple of his eye and an accomplished rider herself,

has been heavily involved for 15 years. "One day I hope she'll take over from me," Beaumont said. "But before then I'd like to find her a Grand National horse."

Anthea has already tasted victory over the National fences with one of the stable's favourites, J. J. Henry, who won the 1991 John Hughes Memorial Trophy. He, along with the 27-year-old Sporting Luck, makes pride of place among the 25 racehorses in residence.

To look around Beaumont's training set-up reveals he is well placed to further his achievements. There is an immaculately kept nine-furlong turf gallop backed up by another, of five furlongs, which climbs relentlessly to the skyline at the edge of the farm. And an all-weather facility is to be installed in the spring.

More immediately, Beaumont is preoccupied with Jodami's defence of the Gold Cup, the build-up to which starts at Haydock today. An air of calm assurance is betrayed only by events at Chepstow, but the horse has recently indicated that he is approaching his best. His trainer pronounces him fit enough to do himself justice, although he has obviously left a little to watch with.

Waterlogged home gallops on Wednesday saw the horse diverted to nearby Malton, from where Jimmy Fitzgerald must painfully reflect on how he turned down the chance to buy Jodami on a visit to Ireland five years ago.

For some peculiar reason, it is rare indeed for a Gold Cup winner to repeat his triumph 12 months later. However, Jodami's victory at Cheltenham in March signalled him out as a horse of immense potential. The Peter Marsh Chase this afternoon will go a long way towards revealing whether Jodami can oblige the public's craving for an outstanding steeplechaser.

King Of The Gales to triumph over Gold Cup hopes

HAYDOCK PARK BBC1

1.00 Sweet Duke is one of the toughest and most consistent horses in training and on his favoured soft ground he will be a tough nut to crack. Avro Anson and Burgoyne, who filled the minor places behind the Nigel Twiston-Davies-trained stayer at Ascot in December, re-oppose on 7lb better terms but will struggle to gain revenge. Peeweed was well beaten by the selection at Cheltenham.

1.30: Tannanmen Square can confirm the strength in depth of Irish hurdlers by outclassing this field and become a leading fancy for the Champion Hurdle at Cheltenham. Noel Meade's lightly-raced runner has only suffered one defeat in his career — behind Monteludo in the inaugural Cheltenham bumper — and he is bound to have come on from his seasonal debut at

Next best: Emerald Storm (1.15 Kempton Park)

Leopardstown last month. If there is an upset it could be provided by Sybilin, the Arkle Chase favourite, whose high cruising speed is a potent weapon.

2.00: This is a nightmare race for punters with the two form horses, Jodami and Run For Free, returning after setback or injury, while other runners at their peak are a long way out of the handicap proper. Run For Free should gain revenge over Jodami for his defeat in this race last year, being 18lb better off for two lengths, but I fancy this could produce an upset in the shape of the Irish contender, King Of The Gales. The Strong Gale gelding has not stopped improving and his defeat of Ferromyn and Deep Heritage in the Findus Chase at Leopardstown last month reads well.

KEMPTON PARK C4

1.45: Fox Chapel is the best handicapped horse by far, but he ducks the issue too often to make him a sound bet. Mediator's victory at Cheltenham last time has been boosted by the subsequent successes of the second and third horses, Jacqueline Doyle's runner has won mak-

TODAY'S RACES ON TELEVISION

ing the running or coming from off the pace and he is marginally preferred to Jopani, who recorded his best performance when carrying top weight to victory at Ascot nine weeks ago.

2.15: Bibendum looks handily weighted to get back on the winning trail after unseating his rider at Sandown last time. The course and distance winner was impressive when beating subsequent winners, Fighting Words and Deadly Charm (re-opposes on similar terms), here in November. Rough Quest is thrown in on his form of two years ago, but showed nothing at Uttoxeter last time while Uncle Eli falls as often as he completes.

2.45: Northern Saddler runs in my colours and has been a revelation on soft ground over two miles, having won four times this season. He would not be running here but for the cancellation of Taunton on Thursday and I believe the rise in class today means he is most unlikely to win. A line through Absalom's Lady gives him a revelation on soft ground over two miles, having won four times this season. He would not be running here but for the cancellation of Taunton on Thursday and I believe the rise in class today means he is most unlikely to win.

3.15: One of the best novice chasers this season sees Baydon Star, returning to his winning distance, being tackled by Current Express, who was a top novice hurdler two seasons ago. Despite not running last campaign, Nicky Henderson's chasing debutant is being spoken of as Arkle material. Big Beat, who failed to stay when well beaten behind Easy Buck and Baydon Star at Ascot, should ensure a decent pace.

RICHARD EVANS

HAYDOCK PARK

THUNDERER
1.00 Sweet Duke
1.30 Tannanmen Square
2.00 Run For Free

GOING: SOFT (GOOD TO SOFT IN PLACES) SIS

1.00 PREMIER LONG DISTANCE HURDLE

(Grade II: £9,500; 2m 7f 110yd) (5 runners)
1-10-20-30-40-50-60-70-80-90-100-110-120-130-140-150-160-170-180-190-200-210-220-230-240-250-260-270-280-290-300-310-320-330-340-350-360-370-380-390-400-410-420-430-440-450-460-470-480-490-500-510-520-530-540-550-560-570-580-590-600-610-620-630-640-650-660-670-680-690-700-710-720-730-740-750-760-770-780-790-800-810-820-830-840-850-860-870-880-890-900-910-920-930-940-950-960-970-980-990-1000-1010-1020-1030-1040-1050-1060-1070-1080-1090-1100-1110-1120-1130-1140-1150-1160-1170-1180-1190-1200-1210-1220-1230-1240-1250-1260-1270-1280-1290-1300-1310-1320-1330-1340-1350-1360-1370-1380-1390-1400-1410-1420-1430-1440-1450-1460-1470-1480-1490-1500-1510-1520-1530-1540-1550-1560-1570-1580-1590-1600-1610-1620-1630-1640-1650-1660-1670-1680-1690-1700-1710-1720-1730-1740-1750-1760-1770-1780-1790-1800-1810-1820-1830-1840-1850-1860-1870-1880-1890-1900-1910-1920-1930-1940-1950-1960-1970-1980-1990-2000-2010-2020-2030-2040-2050-2060-2070-2080-2090-2100-2110-2120-2130-2140-2150-2160-2170-2180-2190-2200-2210-2220-2230-2240-2250-2260-2270-2280-2290-2300-2310-2320-2330-2340-2350-2360-2370-2380-2390-2400-2410-2420-2430-2440-2450-2460-2470-2480-2490-2500-2510-2520-2530-2540-2550-2560-2570-2580-2590-2600-2610-2620-2630-2640-2650-2660-2670-2680-2690-2700-2710-2720-2730-2740-2750-2760-2770-2780-2790-2800-2810-2820-2830-2840-2850-2860-2870-2880-2890-2900-2910-2920-2930-2940-2950-2960-2970-2980-2990-3000-3010-3020-3030-3040-3050-3060-3070-3080-3090-3100-3110-3120-3130-3140-3150-3160-3170-3180-3190-3200-3210-3220-3230-3240-3250-3260-3270-3280-3290-3300-3310-3320-3330-3340-3350-3360-3370-3380-3390-3400-3410-3420-3430-3440-3450-3460-3470-3480-3490-3500-3510-3520-3530-3540-3550-3560-3570-3580-3590-3600-3610-3620-3630-3640-3650-3660-3670-3680-3690-3700-3710-3720-3730-3740-3750-3760-3770-3780-3790-3800-3810-3820-3830-3840-3850-3860-3870-3880-3890-3900-3910-3920-3930-3940-3950-3960-3970-3980-3990-4000-4010-4020-4030-4040-4050-4060-4070-4080-4090-4100-4110-4120-4130-4140-4150-4160-4170-4180-4190-4200-4210-4220-4230-4240-4250-4260-4270-4280-4290-4300-4310-4320-4330-4340-4350-4360-4370-4380-4390-4400-4410-4420-4430-4440-4450-4460-4470-4480-4490-4500-4510-4520-4530-4540-4550-4560-4570-4580-4590-4600-4610-4620-4630-4640-4650-4660-4670-4680-4690-4700-4710-4720-4730-4740-4750-4760-4770-4780-4790-4800-4810-4820-4830-4840-4850-4860-4870-4880-4890-4900-4910-4920-4930-4940-4950-4960-4970-4980-4990-5000-5010-5020-5030-5040-5050-5060-5070-5080-5090-5100-5110-5120-5130-5140-5150-5160-5170-5180-5190-5200-5210-5220-5230-5240-5250-5260-5270-5280-5290-5300-5310-5320-5330-5340-5350-5360-5370-5380-5390-5400-5410-5420-5430-5440-5450-5460-5470-5480-5490-5500-5510-5520-5530-5540-5550-5560-5570-5580-5590-5600-5610-5620-5630-5640-5650-5660-5670-5680-5690-5700-5710-5720-5730-5740-5750-5760-5770-5780-5790-5800-5810-5820-5830-5840-5850-5860-5870-5880-5890-5900-5910-5920-5930-5940-5950-5960-5970-5980-5990-6000-6010-6020-6030-6040-6050-6060-6070-6080-6090-6100-6110-6120-6130-6140-6150-6160-6170-6180-6190-6200-6210-6220-6230-6240-6250-6260-6270-6280-6290-6300-6310-6320-6330-6340-6350-6360-6370-6380-6390-6400-6410-6420-6430-6440-6450-6460-6470-6480-6490-6500-6510-6520-6530-6540-6550-6560-6570-6580-6590-6600-6610-6620-6630-6640-6650-6660-6670-6680-6690-6700-6710-6720-6730-6740-6750-6760-6770-6780-6790-6800-6810-6820-6830-6840-6850-6860-6870-6880-6890-6900-6910-6920-6930-6940-6950-6960-6970-6980-6990-7000-7010-7020-7030-7040-7050-7060-7070-7080-7090-7100-7110-7120-7130-7140-7150-7160-7170-7180-7190-7200-7210-7220-7230-7240-7250-7260-7270-7280-7290-7300-7310-7320-7330-7340-7350-7360-7370-7380-7390-7400-7410-7420-7430-7440-7450-7460-7470-7480-7490-7500-7510-7520-7530-7540-7550-7560-7570-7580-7590-7600-7610-7620-7630-7640-7650-7660-7670-7680-7690-7700-7710-7720-7730-7740-7750-7760-7770-7780-7790-7800-7810-7820-7830-7840-7850-7860-7870-7880-7890-7900-7910-7920-7930-7940-7950-7960-7970-7980-7990-8000-8010-8020-8030-8040-8050-8060-8070-8080-8090-8100-8110-8120-8130-8140-8150-8160-8170-8180-8190-8200-8210-8220-8230-8240-8250-8260-8270-8280-8290-8300-8310-8320-8330-8340-8350-8360-8370-8380-8390-8400-8410-8420-8430-8440-8450-8460-8470-8480-8490-8500-8510-8520-8530-8540-8550-8560-8570-8580-8590-8600-8610-8620-8630-8640-8650-8660-8670-8680-8690-8700-8710-8720-8730-8740-8750-8760-8770-8780-8790-8800-8810-8820-8830-8840-8850-8860-8870-8880-8890-8900-8910-8920-8930-8940-8950-8960-8970-8980-8990-9000-9010-9020-9030-9040-9050-9060-9070-9080-9090-9100-9110-9120-9130-9140-9150-9160-9170-9180-9190-9200-9210-9220-9230-9240-9250-9260-9270-9280-9290-9300-9310-9320-9330-9340-9350-9360-9370-9380-9390-9400-9410-9420-9430-9440-9450-9460-9470-9480-9490-9500-9510-9520-9530-9540-9550-9560-9570-9580-9590-9600-9610-9620-9630-9640-9650-9660-9670-9680-9690-9700-9710-9720-9730-9740-9750-9760-9770-9780-9790-9800-9810-9820-9830-9840-9850-9860-9870-9880-9890-9900-9910-9920-9930-9940-9950-9960-9970-9980-9990-10000-10010-10020-10030-10040-10050-10060-10070-10080-10090-10100-10110-10120-10130-10140-10150-10160-10170-101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The rival captains, Richardson and Atherton, found time for a friendly interlude on the beach in Antigua yesterday before getting to grips in earnest in Barbados next month

Richardson will play 'hard but fair'

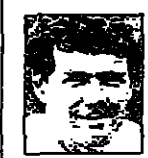
The expressions of concern were robust enough, the friendliness genuine, but the next time Richie Richardson and Michael Atherton shake hands they will have more than palm trees for company and more than mere curiosity will be at stake. The first meeting of the captains for the forthcoming Test series, a Lancastrian and an adopted Yorkshireman, on a near-deserted beach in Antigua heralded the start of a rivalry which will do much to set the sporting spirit of the next three months.

Richardson, who has transformed the unsmiling face of West Indian cricket since succeeding his mentor, Viv Richards, two years ago, made all the right diplomatic noises. "I haven't played too much against Mike over the past few years, so I can't say I know him well," Richardson said. "But I do know he is a strong person and will be a more

than capable captain. There have never been any problems between the two sides in the past and I see no reason why there should be any this time. The spirit has always been good."

In truth, the relationship has known moments of strain. On the last tour, the third Test ended in rancour as England's vain chase for victory in Trinidad was thwarted by rain and the West Indian genius for slowing the over-rates down to Caribbean time. It proved the turning point of the series. Having come within half-an-hour of establishing a 2-0 lead, England never recovered their poise and lost the series 2-1.

Gooch and Richards, the respective captains (although Haynes led in Richards's absence in Trinidad), were hardened campaigners. This time Atherton is a fledgling captain and Richardson, despite turning 32 last week, has only



ANDREW LONGMORE
With England in Antigua

learned to fly solo over the last year. Their confrontation will have none of the half-follies well-meet jollity of Richards and Botham nor the narrow-eyed suspicion of Gooch and Richards. "The series will be hard, but fair," Richardson said.

Neither captain was at his finest for the introduction. Atherton suffering from a throat virus, Richardson recovering from a condition officially described as a "low blood count" but generally regarded as an outbreak of cricket fatigue. Atherton sympathised, doubtless wondering whether an England itinerary which includes Tests against

West Indies, New Zealand, South Africa and Australia over the next 14 months would reduce him to a similar state of exhaustion by the summer of 1995. He will be older and wiser certainly.

After a month of convalescence back in his tiny home village of Five Islands, Richardson plans to ease his way back into cricket for the Leeward Islands next weekend. "I'm raring to go again now," he said yesterday. "No one really knows what the problem was. I'd been feeling very tired for some time at the end of last year and when I came home from Sri Lanka before Christmas, the doctors ad-

vised me to rest. My body was just not feeling right. We'd played a lot of cricket and I think it was trying to tell me something."

This series, which begins in earnest with the first one-day international in Barbados on February 16 and the first Test in Jamaica three days later, is as much a test for Richardson's growing authority as it is for Atherton's embryonic captaincy.

Since beating Australia last winter, Richardson has largely shed the controversy over his appointment and subsequent selections which reached its peak with the boycott of the South African Test by the Barbadians in April 1992.

"I was disappointed by that and hurt, but not badly," he added. "It just made me more determined to succeed. I feel more relaxed now, more confident on the field. I'm still learning and I still depend a

helluva lot on the experience built up over the last few years. Whatever people like to say, this is not my team."

Richardson will drop in to the Recreation Ground in St John's a few times over the next few days to watch England take on an Antigua XI in a four-day match which begins tomorrow. It is no more than a leg-stretching exercise for England, but too good an opportunity for the West Indies captain to miss, though he knows most of the players from his summer with Yorkshire.

Yesterday, the England party enjoyed their first full practice match in front of a few tourists and a handful of construction workers supposedly engaged in transforming a few holes in the ground into a new double-decker stand, all in time for the fifth Test in mid-April. By then, the captains will be much better acquainted.

Baggio dares to go against Mum's beliefs



SIMON BARNES
On Saturday

Roberto Baggio, European footballer of the year, and only begotten of these ensuing lines: *Baggio Baggio, non è un miraggio*, is in deep trouble with his Mum. And it is nothing to do with his ponytail: it seems that she can take that in stride. But Matilde Baggio, who lives in Caldoggno, in the Veneto in the North-East of Italy, is deeply upset on the question of religion.

"My boy is pure gold," she said. "But he has one defect that is difficult for a practising Catholic to understand. He is a Buddhist." Baggio's exotic taste in religion has long been a traditionally bizarre aspect of Italian football, but this is the first time his mother has voiced her disquiet. "I don't want to make judgments about anything my son does, but I would be much happier if he were a Catholic. Yes, I pray to God every evening to reconvert Roberto to our religion." Never mind, Signora Baggio. I expect one day he'll meet a nice Catholic girl.

mourned across the world when he retired last October as the greatest player of any ball game at any time in history. Now he plans to return to public competition next spring. But not for his old team, the Chicago Bulls. He wants to play for the Chicago White Sox — at baseball. He is working out with the team: "I want to go to spring training for one reason, and that is to make the team," he said. "This is no fantasy. I plan to be in Sarasota by mid-February. I'm serious. My father thought I could be a major league baseball player, and I'm sure that right now he can see me trying." Jordan's father was murdered last August, an incident that probably prompted Jordan's retirement. Jordan added: "This is my life. I'd like to lead it the way I choose. Everyone else is free to watch it." Jordan has not played organised baseball since he was a teenager. But perhaps it's like riding a bicycle.

Power jumping

Nice to hear from an old friend of this column, Durstan Odeke, the Ugandan ski jumper. Alas, he will not be taking part in the Winter Olympics this year, but his heart is set on taking part in four years' time in Japan. He has found a sponsor, a firm called Power that sells sportswear in Africa, and he plans to do his damndest to assault the intervening three Europa Cup and World Cup series. Unsurprisingly, he has caught the eye of the Nordic press: in the home of ski jumping he is *Africas første skihopper*.

Net minder

It is, of course, vitally important to have a goal in life and that is why we must celebrate goals of the week. Pedro Almenaz, recently retired after 22 years as a goalkeeper with an amateur club in Spain. On his departure, he was presented with one of the goals he so valiantly defended. He set up the posts in his garden, but turned the net into a hammock: perhaps the perfect image of the perfect sporting retirement.

Hair-raising

Greg Matthews, cricketer from New South Wales, Australia and Mars, seems to have got himself a head transplant. A sound move, too. He is deep in commercial involvement with some people called Advanced Hair Studios. Matthews, the twitchiest cricketer since Derek Randall, started to lose his hair early. Now he has got tons of the stuff. It is, apparently, the same strand-by-strand hair replacement that Gazza tried out briefly in football's pre-season. Matthews is now talking about an Afro, or maybe Rastafarian dreadlocks. "I honestly like the look," he said. "I peek in the mirror and I think, not bad. I do look a couple of years younger." Matthews has been published by solicitors to say nothing about a night-club auction that took place last month, on a night when he had been spotted wearing a red bandanna to hide the heady work in progress. He ended up unconscious and in hospital. No, Matthews is not a man who takes the simple options in life.



Jordan at bat

It was, of course, inevitable that the Greatest Shock Retirement in Sporting History should be followed by the most dramatic comeback. Michael Jordan, basketball supreme and dream-teamer extraordinaire, was

Hollywood days

Shane Warne, the Australian leg-spinner, famous for innovative stage make-up and detonation of the laws of physics, seems to have been in the limelight for only ten minutes or so and yet his biography has just been published in Australia. With 278 pages, it might seem like a lot of bread and not a lot of Marmite, but the book tells us some fascinating things about his season as a club cricketer in England: 15 matches, 90 wickets, 900 runs, and a 25 per cent weight increase. His figures on his first-class debut were one for 102: you'll never get anywhere bowling like that, son. First four innings bowled in Tests: one for 335. Fascinating fact: Warne was coached by the man who coached Robin Smith when he was a lad. Some men are beyond coaching: Smith's performances against Warne proved that.

Australia's batsmen nonplussed by Snell

GARY Kirsten, the opening batsman, scored an unbeaten 112 and Richard Snell, the fast bowler, followed up by capturing five wickets for 40 as South Africa beat Australia by 28 runs in the first match of the World Series Cup Finals in Melbourne yesterday.

Kirsten's century was the first in this season's competition. He scored his runs from 137 balls as he steered South Africa to 230 for five in their 50 overs.

Despite a spirited effort from Allan Border, the last six Australian wickets went down for 52 to the disappointment of a crowd of 69,384.

Border said afterwards that the South Africans, who have now beaten Australia in four of their last six limited-overs matches were "a tremendous force".

Loye learns value of patience

FROM MICHAEL HENDERSON
IN EAST LONDON,
SOUTH AFRICA

ALTHOUGH he was slow to recognise its virtue, Malachi Loye played the most responsible innings of his career at Buffalo Park here yesterday. It took him 77 overs to make 71, which sounds slow going, but without his contribution, and that of Steve Rhodes, England A would be in a considerably weaker position.

After winning the toss they batted all day to make 229 for six. If the last four wickets push the score along by another hundred, they will be happy. In humid conditions, flit and cork will swing the ball more than Border's bowlers did, and one hopes Croft and Such can achieve the greater turn that the portly Howell, whose figures of one for 16 from 28 overs testify to

his accuracy rather than his ability to rip the ball.

When Loye came in at tea, having made 21 runs in the afternoon, he needed to be convinced that he had played well. In normal circumstances self-denial plays little part in his game but with Crawley's departure to the first ball after lunch, Loye and Rhodes were forced to rebuild an innings which had slipped to 93 for four.

In the next 64 overs they made 131 runs most sensibly until, shortly before stumps, Loye played on to Howell and Taylor, who was again sent in to see the day out safely, was leg-before to Badenhorst.

The tone of the first half-hour, when Crawley — opening in place of Lathwell — ensured 51 runs were on the board by the tenth over could not have been more misleading. That was as many as Loye

and Rhodes made in 36 overs of the afternoon.

Morris perished when he gambled on a run to Strydom's left hand at cover and found out why the fielder's nickname is "Striker". Dale, promoted to No 3, began brightly before Fourie de-

ceived him with a slower ball. In the eleven over of an unusually long opening spell, 13 in all, Fourie had Wells leg-before.

It was not Fourie's full-length ball which surprised the batsmen. On a slow pitch of modest bounce this medium-pace bowler struck Crawley, who did not see the ball, on the helmet and later hit Wells. His quicker ball is interesting, to say the least: so much so that the umpires might be advised to take a closer interest.

Crawley, presented with a long hop to bring up his half-century, pulled fiercely to short mid-wicket. Then Loye and Rhodes got stuck in. Loye was the type of innings that enables young cricketers to grow up and he will be unhappy not to have made a century. Rhodes, on 59 after 70 overs, can still get there.

ENGLAND A: First Innings	
J P Crawley c Croft b Badenhorst	49
M Morris run out	15
A Dale b Fourie	12
A P Wells c Taylor b Fourie	10
M B Love b Howell	71
15 J Rhodes not out	59
J P Taylor c Paltaman b Badenhorst	1
R D Croft not out	12
Extras (b 2, lb 3, w 4, nb 1)	10
Total (8 wickets)	229
D G Croft, M C Kest and P M Such to bat	
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-36, 2-59, 3-74, 4-83, 5-224, 6-237	
SCORING: Fourie 21, 2-22; Badenhorst 21, 2-55; Strydom 14, 4-224; Howell 28, 18-151; Strydom 1-0-4-0; Badenhorst 12-4-15-0	
BORDER: M P Storer, A G Lawson, B M Croft, P J Croft, P C Symonds, P J Botha, R J Paltaman, A Badenhorst, "I" Howell, B C Fourie, A Badenhorst	
Umpires: K Labrooy and E Seale	

Halliday's strike decisive

By SYDNEY FRISKIN

ST ALBANS and Stourport were due to meet in the semi-finals of the national indoor hockey championship at Crystal Palace last night after victories over Doncaster and Barford Tigers, respectively. In 1990 and 1992, Stourport were runners-up to St Albans.

St Albans won 6-5 after Doncaster had made a spirited recovery to level at 5-5 after trailing 4-1. A goal in the closing seconds by Andy

Halliday sent St Albans through.

Doncaster's early raids were inspired by Robert Crutchley, who put them ahead in the fifth minute after a defensive error by Halliday, who made amends by equalising. By half-time Ian Jennings had put St Albans 2-1 ahead from a corner.

With further help from Jennings and Halliday, St Albans took a 4-1 lead but could then

Havard's chances look slim

By SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT

FLOYD Havard, of Wales, tries to bridge an immense gap in class against John John Molina, the International Boxing Federation (IBF) super-featherweight champion, at Sophia Gardens, Cardiff tonight. Havard's attempt looks as one-sided as Andy Holligan's did when he failed in a challenge against the great Julio Cesar Chavez just before Christmas.

Molina is not a Chavez, but his experience and technical ability is far above Havard's. Havard, 28, was an excellent prospect, until he injured his hand in 1989 and was out of the ring for 18 months. Since his return in March 1991 he has boxed only five times, two of those bouts were against Harry Escott. He stopped Escott the first time in seven rounds but then had to go eight rounds to outpoint him. Even though Havard has only lost one of his 26 contests,

none of his opponents was near the class of the best that Molina has faced, not even Pat Cowdell, who was well past his prime when Havard knocked him out in eight rounds five years ago.

The Puerto Rican was an outstanding amateur, winning 92 of his 103 contests and gold medal in the North American championship and World Cup in 1985. He signed professionally for \$100,000 (about £66,000) in 1985 with Main Events, the powerful American promotion group that is behind Evander Holyfield and Lennox Lewis.

Molina, also 28, has been beaten only three times as a professional in 36 bouts. He failed in his first attempt to lift the IBF title in 1988, losing on points to Tony Lopez, but a year later won the title by knocking out Lopez in the tenth round.

In 1990 but regained it two years later and has defended it four times since. He is an excellent boxer-fighter with a good chin and has a very high work rate. As Havard does not have a big enough punch to cause an upset, the only outcome looks like a painful boxing lesson for the Welshman.

Eamonn Loughran makes the first defence of his World Boxing Organisation (WBO) welterweight title against Alessandro Duran, of Italy, at the King's Hall, Belfast tonight. Loughran, 23, from Ballymena, won the title by outpointing Lorenzo Smith, of America, in the same venue, last October.

Duran, 28, has been a professional for 11 years and lost only three times in 37 contests but there are few opponents of note on his record. Loughran has won 20 bouts, lost one and drawn one.

SNOW REPORTS

	Depth (cm)	U	Conditions	Run to	Weather (Sun)	Last snow
ANDORRA	105	180	good	varied	art	fine -12 20/1
Excellent piste skiing with powder off-piste						
AUSTRIA	70	120	good	varied	good	sun -8 17/1
Obertauern	20	70	good	varied	good	sun -5 17/1
St Anton	40	180	Best skiing at Hochalm, Avellana and Ellmau	good	varied	fine -6 17/1
Good skiing on and off piste						
FRANCE	130	220	good	varied	good	fine -3 16/1
Alpe d'Huez	135	220	Plenty of sun and snow with no queues	varied	good	sun -10 16/1
Tignes	180	360	Excellent skiing on well groomed slopes	good	varied	sun -5 17/1
Val Thorens	56	100	Pistes deserted and groomed to perfection	fair	fair	-4 6/1
ITALY	45	150	Good skiing on well packed snow	hard	sun	-9 17/1
SWITZERLAND	25	65	Generally very good skiing	fair	sun	-6 17/1
Cortina	30	130	Good skiing in many areas	good	fine	-7 17/1
Klosters	50	110	Good skiing on well maintained pistes	good	varied	sun -4 17/1
Mislin	25	80	Perfect skiing on uncrowded pistes	good	varied	sun -8 14/1
St Moritz			Great skiing all areas under sunny skies			

Source: Ski Club of Great Britain. L - lower slopes; U - upper; art - artificial.

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BOWLS
MANCHESTER UNITY LIBERTY TROPHY:
Quarter-finals: Cambridgeshire v Essex
Skegness 10/30, Cumbria v Nottinghamshire
(Richardson, Mation 12.0), Hampshire v Kent
(Dowling, Redfern 10/15), Nottinghamshire v Somerset (Victory, 10/30)
Plymouth 10/30

BASKETBALL
MEN'S NATIONAL CUP: Quarter-finals: Leicester v Guildford (7.30), Manchester v Birmingham (8.0), Sunderland v Thames Valley (8.0).

ICE HOCKEY
Premier division: Basingsheke v Murrayfield; Cardiff v Fife. Humberstone v Whiteley, Nottingham v Peterborough; Sheffield v Grindstone; Bellingham v Durham. First division: Chelmsford v Lee Valley; Durness v Oxford; Guildford v Teitford, Milton Keynes v Trafford; Paisley v Romford; Slough v Solihull; Swindon v Streatham.

HOCKEY

NASTRO AZZURRO SOUTH LEAGUE:
Premier division: Portsmouth v Old
Glengarians; Dulwich v Oxted Hawks;
London v Andoverians; High Wycombe v
Luton; Maidstone v Maidstone
Juniors; Millwall v Millwall
Juniors; Mill-Sutton v Chichester; Old
Wiscourtians v Spencer; Wimbledon v
Tampstead and Westminster; Winchester v
Woking; Woking v Woking Juniors;
Surrey; Barnes v Croydon; Bournemouth v
Llandudno; Camberley v Old Mid Whingitians;
Chesham v Barclays Bank; Epsom v
Weybridge Hawks; Lansbury v Basing-
stoke; Couding v Woking Juniors;
Edwardsians v Old Tauntonians; Old
Whingitians v Marlow; Woking v Purley;
Kent/Sutton; Horsham v Heme Bay;
Lewes v Blackheath; Marston Russells v
Southbourne; Old Bordenians v Lymington;
Woking Juniors v Croydon; Croydon v
Wilmingtonians v Gravesend; Seavicks v
Liphington; Tonbridge v Bexleyheath; Tun-
bridge Wells v Bognor; Worthing v Beck-

Barnham, Mildon, Berke, Blues and Otori;
 Barmham + Harrow, Ashford + Gerrards
 Cross, Aylesbury + Hayes, Bracknell +
 Epsom; City of Oxford + Harrow; OMT
 + Milton Keynes; Milton Keynes; Richmond
 Park, Rampton Kays, Sunbury + Mill Hill;
 Molehington + HCC.

NORTHMORCH UNION EAST LEAGUE:
 Barmham + Colchester, Bury St Edmunds +
 Cambridge; Upton, Cratley + Welwyn GC;
 Barnham + Redbridge and Ilford; Luton +
 Westcliff, Norwich City + Chelmsford;
 Farnham + Old Southendian, Bedfordshire
 + Watn in Ipswich; Stevenage + Bedford

WESTERN AND YOUNG MIDLANDS
 LEAGUE: Belper + Coventry and North

Warwickshire: Fritchfield v Leicester
Worcester: Hampton at Arden v Blonwich;
Chales v Worcester Norton, Luchfield v Otton
and West Warwickshire.

CRICKET AND YOUNG NORTH PREMIER
LEAGUE: Alderley Edge v Hightown
Northampton: Ben Rhysdylid v Norton, Black-
burn v Durham University, Farnley v York-
shire; Southport v Timperley.

UNILIFE WEST LEAGUE: Essex Univ v
Hertfordshire Banks, Hereford v Great: Taun-
ton v Plymouth; Worcester-super-Mare v
Worcestershire, Whitchurch D v Bath Buccaneers

VOLLEYBALL
ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND MEN'S

BOWLS
MANCHESTER UNITY LIBERTY TROPHY:
Quarter-finals: Cambridgeshire v Essex
Skegness 10/30, Cumbria v Nottinghamshire
(Richardson, Mation 12.0), Hampshire v Kent
(Dowling, Redfern 10/15), Nottinghamshire v Somerset (Victory, 10/30)
Plymouth 10/30

Saturday portrait: Jennifer Capriati by Rob Hughes

An American princess who has moved out of the court spotlight

Jennifer Capriati regrets she cannot come out to play today. She is 17, going on 18, a young woman in search of a childhood, an education. Instead of playing tennis at Flinders Park in the Australian Open she is at Pasco County High School in Florida, studying law, computer sciences and contemporary history, putting off all talk of a return to the tennis circuit and putting at risk something between \$7 million and \$10 million in endorsement contracts.

She is exercising her right to be free, to listen to the music of Led Zeppelin if she chooses, to try to reintegrate herself into the relative normality of spending time with teenagers, to put behind her the falseness of being the Shirley Temple of American tennis, the girl who was a millionaire by the time she was 13.

So this week cutely rounds off a four-year life cycle of Jennifer Capriati. She was the child whose father threatened to sue the tennis authorities for restraint of trade for preventing his daughter from joining the professional tennis circuit at the age of 12.

In fact, Jennifer was allowed to display her pulverising back-court game in grand slam tournaments for the first time in March 1990, three weeks shy of the lower age limit of 14. And partly because of her, partly because even this sturdy "unbreakable" little madam has found the mental if not physical strains forbidding, the Women's Tennis Association is once more talking of restoring the entry age limit to 16 and upwards.

They will probably not get away with it. There are fathers like Stefano Capriati all around, and there are agents like Jennifer's minders in Mark McCormack's International Management Group (IMG) scouting her successors at ever younger ages.

When Jennifer imagines that she might take a year out and return to reclaim her place, she above all must know that the pressures are mounting. There is Anna Kournikova, the Russian who has been working the Florida junior circuits since the McCormack agency took her there at the age of ten. There is Venus Wil-

liams, plucked out of downtown Los Angeles at 11, there is Martina Hingis, from an altogether different social stratum in Switzerland... all with preternatural power of arm and mind, all being groomed to shove aside the burnt-out Capriatis of this dehumanising financial sporting world.

When Jennifer last played, at the US Open in September when she lost in the first round, pieces of floating bone in her elbow were said to be the trouble. Old stages of tennis sneered that it was more likely the chip on her shoulder, the fact that this daughter of a feisty Milanese father and a mother, Denise, born in the Bronx and risen to become an air stewardess, could not take the fact that the winning no longer came easily.

But Capriati had been at the

'Sometimes I get tired of all the attention. There are times I would like to say no'

game longer even than the ten-year-olds. Papa Capriati once insisted that her tennis stardom came from the womb. Mr and Mrs Capriati were playing club tennis right up to her birth. As soon as she could stand, her father had Jennifer doing sit-ups. He had her playing 100-stroke rallies before she reached the age of four, and though he relinquished some of the schooling of his daughter, he had regained control, both as full-time tutor and financial manager, by the time the Capriatis hit Europe in her fourth year.

Before then the family had moved from New York to the tennis kindergarten of Florida. Jimmy Evert, father of Chris, coached Jennifer until she was nine, and John Evert, Chris's brother, became a training partner and her personal agent at IMG. Yet when Jennifer won her own crowning victory, becoming the 16-

year-old Olympic champion in Barcelona, she disclaimed the Evert connection. "I don't have blonde hair and blue eyes, and I'm not the next Chris Evert. I'm different. I'm me," she told us with that same feisty, independent trait of her father.

Up to that Olympic triumph, Jennifer's real value, the selling factor, had been to dress her up as the sports child phenomenon, the youngest to attempt this and that. She used the Barcelona platform to declare: "Maybe I have tried to break away in some extreme ways, but I never hurt anybody. I mean, if I like black fingernails, I'm going to do it. I'm treated like a baby when it comes to contracts and stuff, well, if I can make those big pressure decisions during a match, I want a little more credit for being responsible. I'm not stupid."

She had begun that year, 1992, labelled "sulky, bulky, moody and bored". She had become short-tempered even, or especially, with her parents. She was behaving, in short, like a teenager.

So when the American psychoanalysts began assessing her from afar last month, their conclusion that rebellion was forming in the girl was dated. Their observations came when Jennifer was accused of shoplifting, of putting on a \$15 ring in a Florida jeweller's shop, and walking out without paying. The police dropped the case with a warning: the media and the experts have not yet dropped their interest in assuming that this spoilt little rich girl had no sense of right or wrong.

There are many theories. Mine is that, fleetingly, she acted with the irresponsible childishness of the adolescence that had long passed her by.

"Attention seeking" was another of the supposedly informed reactions to Jennifer's lapse. We forgot that in 1990, when playing Wimbledon, she had reminded us: "Sometimes I get tired of all the attention. Sometimes I would just like to say no."

She could not, of course, do anything of the kind. She was then, in her mother's words, the great white hope of America, the

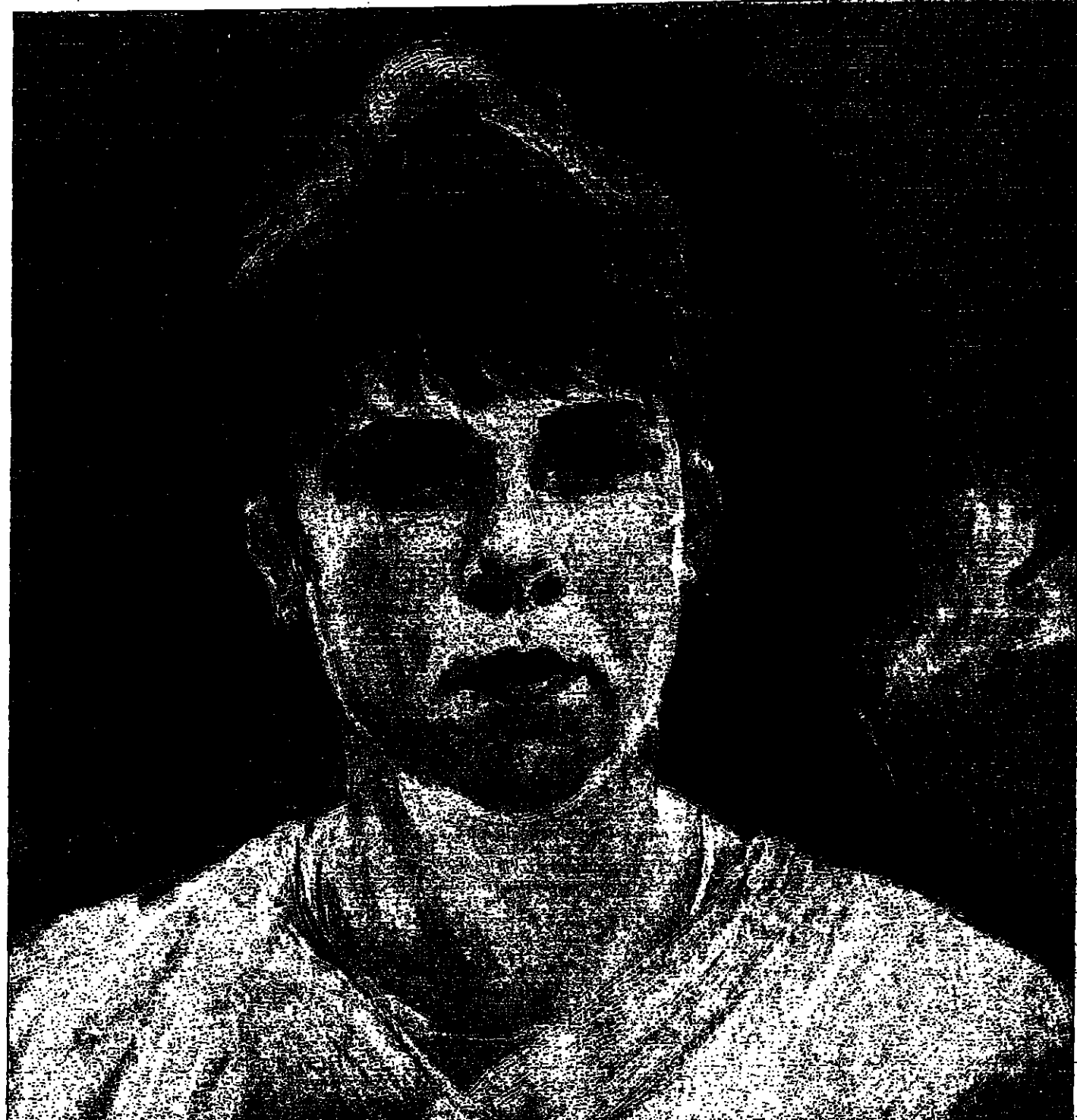


ILLUSTRATION BY STEVE MARTIN

property of companies such as Prince, Diadora, Oil of Ulay, Gatorade and Texaco which all owned a piece of her, and all expected and demanded that she parade their products along with her dark hair, her big-boned and sturdy prodigious gifts.

She could slam a ball over a net at 95mph, so why should anyone make allowances for the fits and starts, the naughtiness, the privacy that growing girls surely are

entitled to? Now that she has safely put large sums of money in the bank, now that she seems independent enough to decide to jeopardise the earning of much more - of it, reasonableness abounds in her family.

"Last year everyone saw my daughter as a player burning out," Denise Capriati says. "I saw my daughter in pain. She can have the last word by going back to the game, but if she doesn't she will go

to college. A champion doesn't compete only in tennis."

But Jennifer has had a kind of education on the road. When she first played at the Foro Italico in Rome, at almost 14 years of age, she could giggle after being knocked out of the grand slam early and enjoy the sightseeing. "Boy," she exclaimed, "this is a great history town." And if she is now history, then it is also historical that philosophers and con-

cerned medical observers saw the Jennifer Capriatis coming.

"All agree that physical training should form part of education, and that until the age of puberty should be less exacting, avoiding too strict a diet and over-work, so as not to hinder growth." So said Aristotle, around the year 350BC. Bye-bye Jennifer, enjoy the rest of your teenage years.

Sport's victims, page 14

Fighting-fit Graf presents frightening prospect

FROM STUART JONES, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT, IN MELBOURNE



Helgeson hits a backhand return on her way to victory over Huber yesterday. Photograph: Carsten Rehder

STEFFI Graf, winner of three grand slam titles, revealed yesterday that she played throughout last year with a handicap. Almost every day, she required drugs, legally administered, orally and through a needle, to mask pain, particularly in a damaged right foot which eventually required an operation.

She now insists that she is returned to full fitness and no longer depends on medicinal aids to complete a match. The rest of the field in the Australian Open might not relish the latest bulletin, especially Sandrine Testud, who caused one of the surprises in knocking out Helena Sukova, the No 13 seed, 6-4, 6-3.

Testud, 21, from France, is next in line for Graf. The last time she played Graf, in San Diego five months ago, she coped until 5-5 in the first set. She subsequently won only one game.

Graf was known to be ailing physically but the extent of the impairment had not been disclosed previously. Once her foot began to trouble her during the French Open in May, her most regular duty was to visit her doctor.

She seriously contemplated withdrawing from Wimbledon and the US Open, and ended up adding them to her collection of trophies. She describes both triumphs as "a miracle. Every time I won a tournament, I couldn't believe it." Everybody else regarded it as a mundane formality.

She protected herself from the danger of inflicting long-term damage by constantly seeking expert opinion. "I

have seen so many doctors and I don't know how many x-rays I've had."

When the foot injury was aggravated in Leipzig, she was booked into hospital for surgery the next day.

"It was a great year on the one hand because of all the success I had but, on the other, I wouldn't want it again." Her new fitness regime on match days includes an hour's practice beforehand and weight training afterwards. "Things I would never thought about during a tournament."

The top seed and clear favourite, she beat a fellow

German, Barbara Rittner. Swirling gusts of wind induced an inordinate amount of unforced errors, 39 of them, but Graf still won with characteristic ease 6-2, 6-4 in 64 minutes.

Anke Huber, the German No 2, had to contend with more than the awkward conditions. The No 7 seed had to grapple with her own fragile nerves as well. Three times she held a match point in the second set tie-break against Ginger Helgeson, on each occasion, she feebly served a double fault.

In 1991, at the tender age of

16 years and seven weeks, Huber knocked out three seeds here to become the youngest woman to reach the quarter-finals. She was evidently audacious then but fearlessness has since deserted her and she went out 3-6, 7-6, 6-4.

Helgeson, ranked No 49, is unusual. Her favourite colour is teal. She studied broadcasting at university and she credits her recent progress to the assistance of an anatomical functionalist who has designed exercises similar to yoga. She will do well to find peace of mind against her next opponent.

She plays the No 10 seed, Kimiko Date, the leader of a rapidly emerging group of Japanese women and the winner of the New South Wales Open last week. The other matches in the top half of the draw will be Lindsay Davenport against Mary Joe Fernandez and Conchita Martinez against Chanda Rubin.

Marc Rosset's main weapon, a ferocious service, was largely nullified by the wind and the 6ft 7in No 11 seed was beaten by Grant Stafford. The 22-year-old South African, who had to qualify for last year's tournament, next meets another big hitter, Goran Ivanisevic.

As was scheduled in the top half of the draw, the fourth round will also feature a tantalising duel between Pete Sampras and Ivan Lendl, present and past world No 1. Jim Courier, the holder, is to play Wayne Ferreira and Magnus Gustafsson takes on Martin Damm.

Tight finish likely to Auckland leg

BY BARRY PICKTHALL

THE Whitbread Round the World yacht race had turned into a five-boat scramble last night as the leader, *Tokio*, rounded Cape Reinga, the northern tip of New Zealand, with spinnakers at the ready for the final dash of 200 miles down the east coast to Auckland.

Chris Dickson's New Zealand Whitbread-60 continued to hold off Grant Dalton's larger maxi, *NZ Endeavour*, at the head of the fleet, but with three other 60s, *Winston* (skipped by Dennis Conner), *Galicia 93* (Pescanova) and *Yamaha* (Ross Field) all within 17 miles, it was still anyone's race as the third leg neared a climax.

One yacht to lose out in the shifting 15 to 17-knot northerly winds has been *Lawrie Smith's Intram Justitia* which has slipped from first to seventh within two days, 31 miles behind *Tokio*.

"We are pretty exhausted after two days of really hard work with the combination of lack of sleep and intense concentration," Smith said.

Though Dickson and his crew have successfully held off Dalton's maxi upwind, the New Zealander did not expect to maintain the advantage for long. "Right now, we are sailing into the wind and the boats are very similar in performance," he said. "But once we turn the corner at Cape Reinga and pull the big nylon spinnakers up, *Endeavour*, with her two masts will

have about twice our sail area. She is 20ft longer than us and so a lot faster."

Conner, whose American yacht, *Winston*, was in sight and sharing second place within the 60ft fleet with *Galicia 93*, was excited by the prospect of the match race down the coast today.

"We want to be at Cape Reinga close to the leaders as we believe we have a tremendous advantage when it

comes to close-quarter sailing. No one is letting up. They are all keen to have this leg over as soon as possible, especially as we have a good chance of winning it."

Last night, race officials expected the first yachts to complete the 3,270-mile voyage from Fremantle to Auckland at around 1300 GMT and predicted that the first seven yachts would finish within four hours of each other, which would make it the closest finish in the 21-year history of the race.

Information provided by British Telecom



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SPORT

SATURDAY JANUARY 22 1994

SIMON BARNES 32

BAGGIO DARES
TO DEFY HIS
MOTHER'S BELIEFS

Manchester's grief puts draw under cloud

BY ROB HUGHES
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

THE top brass of European football management, here for the draw for the qualifying rounds of the next European championship — the finals of which will be staged in England in 1996 — will find Manchester at half-mast. The visitors from 47 countries might also detect a limpness in the national pride of a country preparing to host its first meaningful football tournament in 30 years.

There is nothing anyone can do to fill the void left by Sir Matt Busby. He, had he been alive and well, would have meant as much to this event — another football draw made spectacle — as he had to British football. He was the first man to take an English club, Manchester United, to

victory in a European Cup final, and his special place as the architect of Manchester United became clear to the visitors as they began arriving yesterday, under grey skies, and seeing everywhere the red scarves laid in Busby's honour in the streets.

When the draw is done and the guests leave the Granada Studios, many of them will go to Old Trafford for the Manchester United versus Everton game. They will hope to see the true pulse of the English game. If they do, they will have to admit that United, a team built on players from seven nations, is special.

When the visitors ask whether Old Trafford itself, now so splendidly refurbished, is also in a class of its own, football administrators will have cause for momentary pride. They will be able to

say that, thanks to the dictat of Lord Justice Taylor, thanks also to the horrors of Heysel, Bradford and Hillsborough, the theatres of football are safe, comfortable and no longer the relics of a hundred years' wasted income.

A nation on the mend? Hardly. The stadiums may be the equal of any on the Continent, England may no longer be the pariahs of the world game, but, as the Football Association sets out to show its muscle as organisers of a tournament expanded to 16 finalists, it is patently clear that it cannot fill a simple managerial vacancy.

England's indecent haste to appoint Terry Venables, postponed because of unresolved doubts over his dealings when chief executive of Tottenham Hotspur, means that there is no England team manager to

HOW THE DRAW WILL BE MADE

TOP SEEDS: Germany, France, Russia, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Italy, Ireland, Ukraine.
SECOND SEEDS: Norway, Romania, Switzerland, Portugal, Greece, Spain, Wales, Republic of Ireland.
THIRD SEEDS: Bulgaria, Belgium, Scotland, N Ireland, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Croatia.
FOURTH SEEDS: Iceland, Austria, Finland, Lithuania, Israel, Macedonia, Belarus, Georgia.
FIFTH SEEDS: Turkey, Latvia, Albania, Cyprus, Malta, Faroe Islands, Estonia, Slovakia.
SIXTH SEEDS: Luxembourg, San Marino, Liechtenstein, Slovenia, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan.

The 47 teams will be drawn into eight qualifying groups, seven with six teams and one with five. Each group will contain one team from each ranking, except the one with five which will not have a sixth-seeded team. The winners of each group and the best six runners-up from the six-team groups qualify for the 1996 finals. The runners-up with the worst record will play off against the team which finishes second in the five-team group. England qualify automatically as hosts.

The man they should talk to

is perhaps Alex Ferguson. He, having finally accepted the mantle of Busby, is conquering deep sadness at the moment. He not only lost one paternal influence in Sir Matt, but also Dick Donald, the former Aberdeen chairman, who channelled Ferguson's

rage, and who died a fortnight ago. Despite this, with some of the Busby strength and quiet resolve rubbing off onto Ferguson, he could pay his own tribute yesterday. "We will all miss Sir Matt. He retained his humility through four decades at this club. No matter what the accolades, he never forgot where he came from, or his ability to mix with the common man."

Regrettably, humility in English football management is not to be found across the board. Dignity was the one quality that Graham Taylor insisted he would not sacrifice as he and England failed. But in the vacuum that an appointment of his successor might have filled, the media this weekend is full of his foul language, his wretched sportsmanship, the excuses for

which he was reportedly paid £100,000.

Taylor's behaviour, to be shown in a television documentary on Channel 4 next week, in blaming a single refereeing decision for the team's failure over ten matches, speaks for itself.

With England having shown an ability to concede a goal to San Marino in under nine seconds, this is hardly the place to scoff at the uneven levels of the qualifying tournament brought about by Uefa's embracing of every break-away state in eastern Europe.

Nevertheless, Uefa is attempting to play Robin Hood by asking the rich European nations to pay for the poor. Holland, for example, could be drawn today in a group involving Croatia, Lithuania, Moldova and similar "minnows".

Can you imagine the Italian paymasters tolerating the release for international duty 14 times over the next months, in addition to World Cup matches, of multi-million pound players to play against partners on some distant provincial field? It will risk accelerating the determination of leading European clubs, themselves overworking players in the expanded European Champions League, to put club before country and seek, with television backing, to establish their own league.

Television is both the catalyst and the danger. The bloated 1996 event is there for two reasons: the television exposure and money.

Manchester mourns, page 3
Peter Barnard, page 14
John Diamond, magazine page 6

Former champion finishes ninth in technical programme

Witt found wanting as Bonaly triumphs

FROM JOHN HENNESSY IN COPENHAGEN

KATARINA Witt, whose return to skating competition has been hyped beyond reasonable expectation, was brought painfully to earth in the European championships here yesterday. She was only ninth in the technical programme and has no chance, surely, of recovering to claim a medal of any hue in the free skating this afternoon. Clad for a Robin Hood routine, she had too few arrows to her bow.

Bravely, she faced the cameras afterwards, the eyes puffed, the tears flowing, to declare: "I'm very, very disappointed, because I've had no problems in training. Normally I could get up in the middle of the night and do that programme in my sleep."

There were gasps of dismay early in her performance when she stepped out of a double axel, a jump she has been able to accomplish with ease since she was little more than a child. She could not remember when it had last let her down, even in training.

Her combination, too, went awry. Hers is the easiest of them all, triple toe loop to double toe loop, and normally under control, but this time she had her weight too far forward on the first landing and had to struggle to pull home the second jump. Her spins, too, lacked quality.

At least the Olympic authorities can take comfort from the fact that this star turn — assuming the glitter has not completely faded — is almost certain to qualify for the Winter Games at Lillehammer next month.

Germany have two places open to them and though Tanja Szewczenko repeated her victory over Witt in the national championships to take fifth place yesterday, the third German, Marina Kielmann, lies fourteenth with 7.0 points, which means she could win the second Olympic place only by finishing three places above Witt today.

Witt insisted she had no second thoughts about coming

back to the amateur ranks. "I have no regrets. I have worked very hard over the past year and I don't see any of it as a waste of time."

The technical programme was won by Surya Bonaly, who is defending the title she won last year in Helsinki. The small but menacing figure of Oksana Baiul, of Ukraine, the winner of the world championship in Prague last season, was second.

Not for them the comparatively understanding combination offered by Witt. Bonaly used the triple lutz and later sprang cat-like into a double axel, as if out of nowhere. She may not be as secure on all of the jumps as she once was, but there was no hint of error yesterday and her marks ranged as high as 5.8. Witt's, on the other hand, plummeted as low as 4.6.

Baiul, clad as a black swan for "Swan Lake", chose the triple flip in her combination and landed it with such uncertainty that the double toe loop appeared almost as an afterthought. Even so, the rest of the elements satisfied the judges to the point that her marks ranged as high as 5.9 for presentation.

Stephanie Main, the 17-year-old British champion, fulfilled her expectations with an error-free, if not entirely convincing, performance. The triple salchow in her combination was a little uncertain but she survived it well enough, along with the accompanying double toe loop, and the other double jumps, axel and flip, presented no problems.

She had three marks of 5.0, which is as much as one can expect of someone of her lack of international experience. Who could have foreseen that three judges would mark her above Witt for content?

RESULTS: Women's technical programme: 1. S Bonaly (Fr) 0.5pts 2. O Baiul (Ukr) 1.0; 3. O Markova (Rus) 1.5; 4. K Kielmann (Ger) 2.0; 5. T Szewczenko (Ger) 2.5; 6. M Buryakova (Rus) 3.0; 7. A Reichenow (Pol) 3.5; 8. L Naranjo (Arg) 4.0; 9. K Witt (Ger) 4.5; 10. L Hubert (Fr) 5.0; British: 10. S Main 9.0

David Miller, page 35



Witt strives in vain to make a strong impression on the judges in the technical programme yesterday

Clark has stomach to prevail on tough course

FROM MEL WEBB
IN AGADIR, MOROCCO

FOR the second week running, Howard Clark this morning goes into the third round of a PGA European Tour event holding a three-stroke lead. He used his wealth of experience to negotiate the manifold perils of the Royal Agadir golf course yesterday to return a 67 for a half way total of 135, nine under par.

Clark, 39, played composed golf to repeat his feat of the previous week when he held the lead on the Madeira Island Open only to falter in the third and last round with a 73 to finish joint second. He is in no mood to slip up again this time.

Once more, Clark was stricken by the stomach bug that afflicted him in

the first round on Thursday. He hitched a lift on a buggy between the sixth green and the seventh tee, making a lightning dash to visit the toilet behind the 10th green. "The relief was enormous," he said, "but this is getting me down."

Nobody watching the former Ryder Cup player would have guessed he was going through agonies. He has been one of the few players who can claim this week to have mastered the beautiful but horribly difficult course that lies, manicured, pristine and largely unplayed within the walls of King Hassan II's palace.

Clark is being chased by Gordon Brand Jr and Anders Forsbrand, who both had 68s, with Mark Roe a shot further back. A three-shot lead on such a course as this is going to take

some catching, though, if Clark manages to maintain the momentum he has gathered in the last 36 holes, stomach cramps and all.

He played almost faultless golf, hitting fairways and greens and making putts. He made only one bogey, on the sixth, putting his drive into the semi-rough and missing a six-foot putt for par, having come up just short of the green.

On the credit side, he birdied the second from two feet, and the ninth from five feet to reach the turn in 35, but the real turning point came at the tenth, which he birdied with two putts from 72 feet. He single-putted the last six greens, which brought him birdies on the 15th, 16th and 17th.

Clark had existed on a diet of a little bread and fruit in the previous 24

hours, and it might be that weakness is now his greatest enemy, not the golf course. Man cannot live by Kaolin and morphine alone.

Brand, not always the quickest starter to the season, was in sparkling form and was obviously a happy man. He is looking far ahead and wants to reclaim his place in the 1995 Ryder Cup team, the selection process for which starts in early September. He has started slowly to avoid burn-out.

Forsbrand, too, played well, although as usual it was difficult to tell whether he was happy or not. The laid-back and taciturn Swede remains an impenetrable character. Perhaps he could do with a touch of Clark's malaise — that would wake him up.

Scores, page 35

Viewers turned on by debacles

BY JOHN GOODBODY

BRITAIN'S fiascos dominated television's sports ratings of 1993. During an *annus horribilis* in which all four home countries failed for the first time to qualify for football's World Cup finals, even these debacles paled beside the Grand National.

Last April, 16.5 million Britons watched the "race that never was" at Aintree, when the red flag of the senior starter failed to unfurl to signal a second false start to the world's most famous steeplechase. It was the biggest viewing audience of the year.

Despite the lack of success at international level, football accounted for 13 of the top 20 audiences in 1993. England's 2-0 defeat by Holland in Rotterdam in October, which effectively ended the chance of reaching the finals, drew 14.1 million viewers, the third highest of the year.

They saw a controversial refereeing decision not to send off Koeman for a professional foul rebound on England as the Dutch defender scored the opening goal shortly afterwards. A month later, 15.8 million tuned in hoping for a last-minute reprieve for England against San Marino. What they saw first was a

goal straight from the kick-off for the smallest country in European football after an error by Pearce, the England captain. Looking, as usual, attracted big audiences, particularly when Frank Bruno and Chris Eubank were involved. However, the most attractive British bout of the year, between Bruno and Lennox Lewis, does not

Average Event (million)	(channel)
16.5	The Grand National (BBC)
16.4	Eubank v Lewis (ITV)
14.1	Holland v England (ITV)
14.0	Bruno v Williams (BBC)
13.4	FA Cup final (BBC)
11.8	San Marino v England (BBC)
11.5	World athletics (BBC)
11.3	England's 10th final (BBC)
11.3	Coronation final (BBC)
10.9	England national day (BBC)
10.7	FA Cup final (BBC)
10.7	Crestle v Lewis (ITV)

Source: BARB

figure because it went out on Sky Sports, which has a restricted audience.

Notable absences from the top 20 were tennis and snooker. Neither Wimbledon singles final figured — normally they rate in the top 10 — while Jonathan Martin, head of BBC sport, said there was still a "world viewership" for snooker's world championship.

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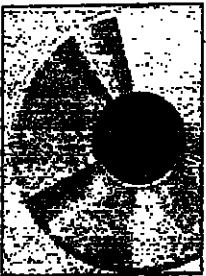
Forsbrand: taciturn



PAUL HEINEY

End of a bovine friendship

Sage is sulking, page 16



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Details and coupon, page 7



FRANCES BISSELL

Gastronomic guide to supermarkets

New series, page 5

CARIBBEAN ISLAND HOPPING
Page 3

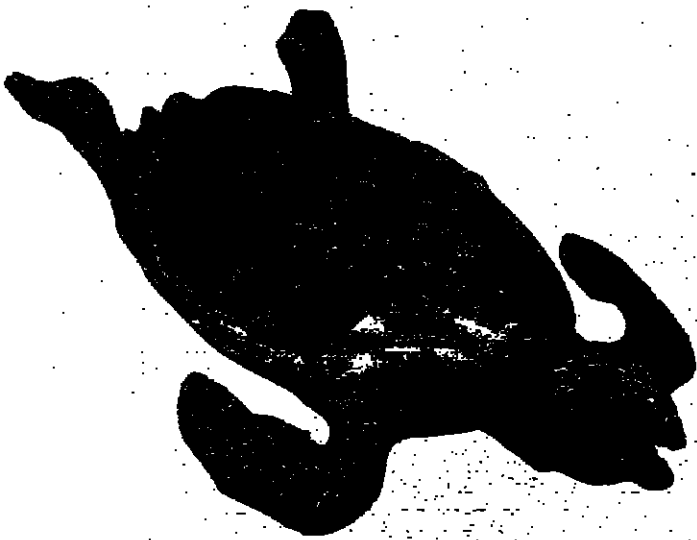
WEEKEND

3

THE TIMES SATURDAY JANUARY 22 1994

For sale:
McAlpine's
treasures

Now you can bid for the weird and
wondrous curiosities that have taken
Lord McAlpine a lifetime to collect.
Here is a preview of the Sotheby's sale



Lord McAlpine of West Green has been fascinated by the morbid and strange since a childhood encounter with the stuffed animals at the Bournemouth museum. Even when treasurer of the Conservative Party, and writing *The Servant*, his update of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, he made time to pursue this passion. The result is crammed from floor to ceiling at his office in the West End of London, from which he also dabbles in art dealing.

Here, among Stone Age axe heads and fossils, nestles a large stone "egg" (a Victorian fake, once claimed to be that of a giant bird) and a dried puffer fish of the sort which kills about two dozen incautious Japanese diners each year with its poison, a single leg from a Viking cauldron, and a rather battered-looking seven-legged lamb (also a fake).

The office resembles an 18th-century gentleman's Cabinet of Curiosities, full of the weird and wonderful. Alistair McAlpine sits in an armchair beside the fire, dressed in a frayed corduroy suit and Hush Puppies, his hair tousled and his striped salmon-and-cucumber Garrick Club tie askew. Arguably he is the most unusual exhibit of all.

Although he has spent much passion, time and effort making this collection, he has decided to sell the lot at Sotheby's. Lord McAlpine is wealthy: last year he came 315th in *The Sunday Times*' survey of Britain's rich. Most of his 1,500 or so curios will fetch less than £300 each, which is chicken feed to a multi-millionaire. So what is behind the sale of his treasure chest?

The main reason is the pull of the church. Lord McAlpine, a lifelong member of the Church of England, has recently been attending Roman Catholic services with a view to converting, and he says: "My decline in interest in the cabinet of curiosities coincided with a religious awakening." He is also writing an "epistolary" novel of letters in which an uncle advises his nephew on politics, "like Chesterfield". Most of the work will be done at his palazzo in Venice, which is consciously kept devoid of collectables, because the city itself is all the visual stimulus he needs.

Despite having psychologically severed himself from his collection, Lord McAlpine was still revelling



Top: one of the stuffed turtles
Above: fake giant bird's egg
Right: Egyptian bust in basalt

In it this week before the arrival of Sotheby's removal vans. Picking some of the humblest objects from his shelves for the last time, he shows his sensual pleasure in them. "I love the feel of the thing: the way it fits into your hand," he says of a two-inch grey stone Syrian bowl, which bears a strong similarity to a beach pebble. "Many things made in the last 3,000 or 4,000 years have roots in natural things," he says.

His favourite pieces are the fakes, because of the scenarios they invoke. The long-dead craftsman who upgraded a medieval Sussex pot by painting it to look like a Greek urn (expected to fetch about £300) may have done so out of "social pretension or the wish to deceive", and he hopes it is the latter, because "deception of other people is unfortunate but greatly to be preferred to self-deception".

He has a seven "Billies and Charlies" — imitations of medieval pilgrims' badges "discovered" in the Thames by two Victorian mudlarks who sold them to gullible passers-by. The seven badges are expected to fetch £300-£500.



Lord McAlpine, in his London office, clambering among some of the hundreds of strange curios picked up in a lifetime of travelling the world



Sadly, he has no mermaid and has frequently visited the natural history museum in Venice to drool over his choice example (actually, a fish joined on to a monkey).

For those who want to start their own cabinet of curiosities, Lord McAlpine has a few firm, if eccentric, suggestions. "You've just got to have a stuffed swordfish," he says, giving his desiccated example a last loving look (his stuffed swordfish is expected to fetch £80-£100, albeit with two duck bills thrown in). "A dagger is also essential," and he brandishes one momentarily in the air. Other "absolute essentials" are a block of porphyry or two and a gnarled knot from a tree.

The field of antiquities is notori-

ously for illegal excavations and smuggling, and sellers often do not know, or care, to reveal where they got them from. As a result, most sale catalogue entries are limited to descriptions of the objects, with no provenances. The McAlpine collection will be no exception.

To minimise the risk of acquiring pieces of questionable origin, he avoided buying through "runners" (opportunistic small-time dealers who scour the provinces for treasures then rush them to London to make a fast buck) and, instead, used a coterie of trusted dealers, who would ring whenever they encountered anything up his street. "Once you've got a name for wanting something, it appears," he

says. This does not mean he has escaped official enquiry into the sources of certain objects. But, being made of stern stuff, he refused to be fazed, and relates incidents with relish.

When the police arrived recently to seize about 30 Bronze Age objects, for example, they "frightened the life out of my poor secretary" but, luckily, "I was on holiday". The items, allegedly found by two metal detector enthusiasts on Salisbury Plain and offered to Lord McAlpine by "a man called John of Salisbury", are now sitting at the British Museum awaiting their fate.

Sotheby's auction may not be the last the art market will see of Lord

SALE NOTES
A selection of the curios
sent for auction at Sotheby's
by Lord McAlpine

with remains of corpse in foundation of church tower, Church Lawford, 1872 (€200-€300).
Celtic bronze horse's bit decorated with ducks' heads originally from the Pin Rivers collection (€800-€1,200).
Lead pilgrim badge, or medieval souvenir from a sacred shrine, bearing the image of Richard Caistor, a venerated vicar from Norwich (€500-€700).
A hornet's nest (€150-€200).
Eight birds of paradise (€300-€400).
Six-inch model of a nine-pounder field gun made in Bombay, 1822 (€600-€800).
Scottish Lowlands dirk (€60-€80).
Early 18th-century Benin bronze bell decorated with a human face (€500-€900).

Huntsman's purse decorated with silver studs (€80-€120).
An 18th-century painting of a Fiji Islander, whose urge to eat Captain Cook "in order to become a great navigator" Lord McAlpine says he understands (€4,000-€6,000).
Wooden figure of Christ from the Congo, including "fetish material on the head" (€400-€600).
Borneo ancestor figure of a pregnant woman with a triangular nose (€150-€250).
Skeletons of a seal, puma and anteater (various prices from €100 to €250).
Six slabs of fossilised ferns (€100-€200).
Collection of fossilised teeth, including those of a giant pig, *Elathidium oligocene* (€100-€150).
Byzantine silver-bearded male bust, AD 500-600 (€400-€500).
Collection of cockfighting spurs, late 18th-19th century (€100-€200).
Haida ivory, engraved drinking cup from North America, decorated with stylised faces (€700-€1,000).
Tibetan ritual steel dagger (€150-€250).

McAlpine. In the past he has collected and then sold garden implements, Australian primitive furniture made from petrol cans and cotton reels, and policemen's truncheons. However, such specific collecting passions come and go, and it is his first love — of curios — which has survived. Until now.

"Life is a series of experiences. You can't spend the whole time reliving them," he says. But adds, after a moment's pause: "I might keep ten or 15 things."

SARAH JANE CHECKLAND

● The sale of Lord McAlpine's collection will be at Sotheby's, 34-35 New Bond Street, London W1 (071-493 8080) on Thursday, February 17.

Grave
lapse of
taste

Garish monuments
spoil our
churchyards

All memorials should be made of natural, unpolished stone with no reflecting finish. Stone traditionally used locally in buildings or stone similar to that in colour and texture are likely to be approved directly by the incumbent. He is not permitted to approve black, blue or red colours, marble, painted stone or plastic... So reads the handbook of churchyard regulations at the country church where I worship.

But not all parishes have a handbook of churchyard regulations, nor a vicar as prepared to put his foot down over the issue of monuments as ours is. And not all dioceses are so keen to keep their churchyards in their traditional form — green refuges that harmonise with the softness of the surrounding countryside by the colour, texture and shapes of the memorial stones.

There is a good reason why the church authorities want to avoid the forest of marble and shiny black polished granite, embellished with strident coloured lettering, that has arrived in so many country

churchyards since the Second World War: these monuments do not slowly crumble and waste away like traditional limestones and sandstones.

Try taking a walk on a sunny day in a country churchyard where these shiny slabs have been allowed to disturb the mellow meanderings and crazy angles of the traditional gravestones. They disturb the peace and distract the eye from the joys of the sculptured creations of our forefathers. They could not be farther from the tradition of our great letter-cutters. And yet such craftspeople still exist, and most funeral directors know the names of those working in their locality.

All too often, as in so many other walks of life, we are presented with a simple, ready-made solution when a difficult presents itself. We lose a loved one: leave the arrangements to the experts...

There follows a "package", whereby the arranging of the funeral and other immediate matters are taken off our hands by the professionals. Most grieving families welcome this. But when it comes to a churchyard memorial, there is a chance for people to be creative in their grief by commissioning a work of art.

A small army of letter-cutters — many of them fine craftsmen in their own right — is available to design and cut a stone or a tablet, often for little more than the cost of a standard machine-cut blank from the monumental mason.

What these people offer is a personal approach. Discussing one's needs at length with a skilled letter-cutter can be an excellent outlet for one's grief, according to Harriet Frazer, who keeps a record of nearly 80 of such craftspeople at her home in Snape, Suffolk.

My view is that if one is prepared to go to the trouble of choosing a stone for a relative, one should aim for the best. As things are, many of the memorials still being erected in our country churchyards are enough to make our dear departed turn in their graves.

CLIVE FEWINS

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UNITED AIRLINES

A weekend sweating it out at a health farm and escaping to the pub helps Alice Thomson and her mother to renew old ties



BONDING with your mother is a relatively easy experience when you are a baby, but at 26 years old it needs some arranging. When your mother comes to stay, inevitably there are problems. "But darling, if only you had told me that you had no tea towels," she says reproachfully as she bounds into the bedroom you share with your boyfriend at 8am carrying tea. "Did you know you have moths in the bathroom? ... I can't seem to get your washing-machine to work ... I thought you had to be at the office by 9am."

If you go back home the problems are magnified. You put off the chores by going through old school reports: your mother makes chumney or rakes leaves. My mother finally decided that we should go to a health farm. She had looked them all up and thought that the Inglewood Health Hydro, near Kimbury in Berkshire, sounded ideal because it was called the "Marks & Spencer of health farms" and would be efficient, reliable and respectable. It would give her time to interrogate her daughter on her marriage prospects and, free of the responsibilities of being a headmistress for 100 dyslexic children, she could paint her nails red and potter around in her dressing-gown all day.

She rang up Inglewood and said that we would like a weekend of preening and primping, starting with waxing and going on to massage. "We are more into waxing cars, but we would be delighted to spend an afternoon waxing you and your daughters," said a gruff voice at the end of

the phone. She had got on to a local garage.

Eventually we got through and, confident that our visit would radically readjust our waistlines, we bought slinky new outfits for my brother's wedding.

When the weekend arrived, we both had crises. London was flooded, we were shattered, exhausted and wet. We ate chocolate all the way to Inglewood.

There are potholes in the drive, my mother tutted as we arrived. This looks like a school (it was, in fact, an old monastery). What bizarre flower arrangements, she said, peering at small tufts of moss and primroses with Barbie dolls playing on swings. But she soon forgot everything when we entered the house, and she was chained up by a large man in a pale blue tracksuit.

Our first session was with the doctor, who saw us together. "So how old are you," the doctor asked. "She is 26," my mother said. "Have you had any childhood illnesses?" "None," I said. "Actually, she had very bad tonsillitis when she was ten," my mother volunteered.

My mother's turn came and she wanted to do everything from antenatal classes to tai chi. They gave her exercises for her stomach and the osteopath was recalled from the car park to look at her back.

We dressed up in black leggings and T-shirts for the onslaught. First came the waxing and eyelash tint. My mother found out that the beautician was dyslexic



Guests steaming through a session at the Inglewood Health Hydro in Berkshire

and formed her first friendship. I made the big mistake of having my nails painted, and was already chipping them by the time I had been to the sauna and had demolished them by the time we had finished playing ping-pong in the chapel. By dinner, we were starving; too exhausted to add up the calories listed on

the dinky flags stuck into each dish. The man in the blue tracksuit ate so much that we did not feel quite as guilty that we had not opted for the minimal 500 calories a day in the dining-room.

The next morning, en route to breakfast, we encountered a sobbing Nigerian girl, who was being deposited by her fam-

ily for a three-month stay to slim her down for her wedding. "No problem, we have a 37-stone woman here. In fact, they are doing a documentary on her. She has been here for a year. She has got so into it that she does the paper round every morning and has lost ten stone," the beaming receptionist told the girl, who spoke no English.

My mother immediately adopted her. She also adopted Miss Aerobics 1989, who had sprained her ankle and was devastated that she was missing training, a masseuse who sobbed on to her back about her boyfriend, and two very respectable schoolteachers.

But she did not have long with her new friends. Our day was planned to the last minute, and we could not even meet for lunch. Everyone waited in a conservatory and on the half hour the doors would open and white-clad assistants would beckon us into the steam-room.

The most popular place was the communal whirlpool, where feet could entwine surreptitiously. We chose the individual steam cabinets, where we had to wait for an egg-timer to ping before they would let us out, and we sat talking at each other's sweaty heads. Then on to the aromatherapy massage, and an hour of being pummelled to the sound of whales mating. My mother was so exhausted that she started skipping classes, and I found her hiding in the bedroom, giggling.

The next day we decided on a more restful programme of activities. We started with riding, followed by croquet, followed by a long walk. We were so engrossed in conversation that we wandered close to a trout farm, my mother stumbled over a trip wire which was attached to a gun and thought she had shot her leg off.

After that we needed a drink. Alcohol is strictly not allowed on Sundays, so after our raw spinach and salmon lunch, we ran the mile to the pub and snatched ourselves there for the afternoon.

By the end of the weekend, we had perked up considerably and were prancing around in matching headbands. It was extraordinarily unpretentious, unpatronising and unprety, and the monks who rested peacefully in the graveyard at the bottom of the gardens would have approved of the comfort and care extended to the stressed and world weary.

MY MOTHER was so impressed by the Inglewood effect that she resolved to bring her sister, her other daughter, new daughter-in-law and then all her friends for a succession of bonding weekends amid the carrots, prunes and steam.

Inglewood's steam-rooms had opened up the conversational pores. My relationship with my mother had gone through the equivalent of a vigorous body scrub and we both felt squeaky clean.

Prices for Inglewood Health Hydro, Kimbury, Berkshire (0488 682022) start from £58 per person a night (minimum one week stay) and from £268 per person for a three-night package (which Alice Thomson and her mother took). Four free treatments a day are included.

The view from a Castilian convent

It only lacked a draw-bridge and water in the moat: a flag fluttered, drums rolled, and medieval music wafted through the air. As I walked up the driveway to the imposing gothic castle in Sigüenza, the sun, sand and sangria of Benidorm seemed a million miles away.

The drive to Sigüenza from Zaragoza revealed a countryside of vivid contrasts: high plains with red rolling hills; snow-peaked mountains; green fields and dazzling sunflower fields in this most eastern of the Castilian provinces.

I had flown to Zaragoza.

Northeast Spain offers too many pleasures to allow you to succumb to the temptations of 'mañana'

Mercifully the stay there was short, as it is a charmless town, enlivened only by the beautiful La Seo cathedral and the Aljaferia palace, home of the Muslim emirs before they were expelled by the Christians.

The cathedral is dominated by memorable frescos by Goya, who lived near by. Salvador Dali declined an invitation to add his own inimitable touch to the ceiling.

thus depriving Zaragoza of a world-class attraction.

The basilica houses the pillar where the Virgin Mary is reputed to have appeared to St James in AD40. Thousands flock to it each week even though contemporary wisdom has it that the pillar was installed there by the Catholic Church, which borrowed it from the Muslim palace further up the road.

Close by are two unexploded bombs which fell on the cathedral during the civil war. A third exploded, conveniently, outside. The Virgin, naturally, is accredited with saving the cathedral. Cynics today say Franco deliberately dropped two duds to put the fear of God, or him, into the locals.

Sigüenza, by comparison, is a charming cathedral city, which has been a stopping point on the road to Zaragoza and Barcelona since Roman times. The magnificently restored castle is one of the state-owned series of 86 *paradores*, conceived as resting places for travellers in 1926. It dominates the tiny town.

Small it may be but Sigüenza has serious culture. Its magnificent cathedral is made up of Romanesque and Gothic sculpture. Tucked away at the back is a horde of treasure, including original paintings by El Greco.

For the third time in two days, my trip to a cathedral coincided with a white wedding, packed with guests oblivious to tourists such as me clicking cameras at the

least opportune moment and snorting too loudly about the authenticity of the local legends.

Beware of the guide in the town's cathedral art museum. He was determined I should spend hours admiring every artefact. But ten minutes was enough. One can only take in so many cathedrals on a weekend trip.

A detour around the quaint cobbled streets, with no guide in sight, in pursuit of a traditional bar was what I had in mind. There are dozens to choose from, and they are open all night. By the time I had explored the fourth one, I decided I had sampled enough

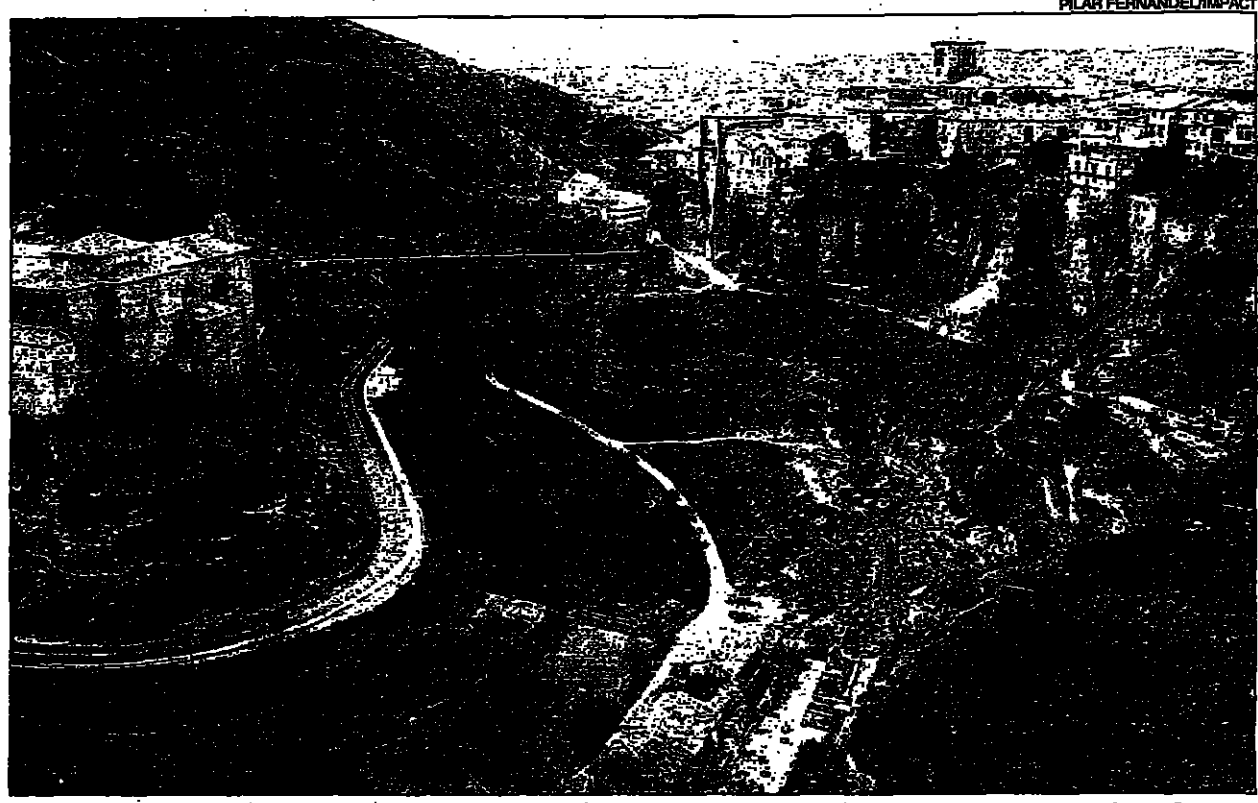


Carved stone drinking fountain in Cuenca

Sigüenza's hospitality and staggered back to the castle.

Dinner in a *parador* is magnificent. Roasts, soups, and fish dishes are served at a long polished table. Close your eyes and you imagine a pig's head served on a platter, minstrels playing, and maidens pouring mead and ale.

I moved on to Cuenca, the



The ancient hanging houses - casas colgadas - perched above the Huécar river in Cuenca were hewn from the rock

capital of the province. The town has narrow streets, sprawling properties, steps hidden under creeping ivy, tourist shops and bustling bars. It descends dramatically to the deep canyons where the rivers Huécar and Júcar meet.

I gave the cathedral only a cursory glance, despite the fact that it dates from the 12th century, and contains a myriad of ecclesiastical treasures (don't they all?). Seen it, done that, I thought, and when the inevitable bridal car arrived, I knew I had made the right decision.

I retreated to my lodgings in the recently refurbished *parador*, the 16th-century San Pablo convent at the foot of the city's walls. From the outside it did not look as impressive as the castle. But the conversion had retained the serenity of a religious house, preserved its history and character, and was immaculately furnished. It overlooks Cuenca's most famous feature, the extraordinary hanging houses - *casas colgadas* - which are hewn

out of the cliff face and perch precariously hundreds of feet above the Huécar.

Lunch had to be in the restaurant in one of the hanging houses. It was a traditional menu of smoked lamb, tripe, suckling pig and thick soups, washed down with wine.

After a trip in a hot-air balloon, which ended in the middle of a sunflower field, I tried the more down-to-earth delights of the Enchanted City, a forest of extraordinary shapes of weathered rock, which is typical of the natural parks in the region.

Time was at a premium so I forsook the Cuenca mountain trail, which promised more of the same - hamlets, forests, and rivers cascading out of rocks - and opted instead for Cuenca's fabled Abstract Art Museum. It was a mistake.

I was pursued by another overzealous guide, who was personally affronted each time my eyes glazed over at the sight of another splash of paint. She introduced me to "Brigitte Bardot": four tins of multi-coloured emulsion dropped from a great height on canvas. I could understand why, if this was her, Bardot had become a recluse. "She loves it," cooed the guide. I'm glad she does.

ANDREW PIERCE

Andrew Pierce was a guest of the Spanish Tourist Board in London. He flew with Air Azueta from Stansted Airport. For information on *paradores*, which range in price from £28 to £72 a night, call Kaytel International on 071-402 8182.

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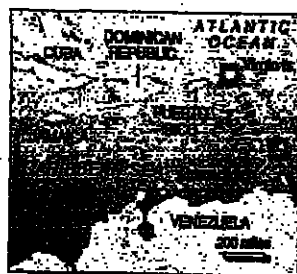
Planning a trip to South Africa? Well, there's never been a better time than now. South African Airways is offering a return flight for £590 with 6 nights top quality accommodation but be quick, there's limited.

Garden Court Hotels and Protea Hotels. If, however, you're planning to stay with friends, South African Airways can help by offering some great reductions on normal Super Pex fares.

Four flight and accommodation offer ends 30th June 1994. Super Pex fare offer ends 29 April 1994. Both offers are subject to certain conditions. To find out more details and further ways South African Airways can be of service to you, please contact your nearest travel agent or nearest SAA office. London Tel: 01-234 9631. Johannesburg Tel: 011-234 9631.

A short hop around the paradise islands

Everything you need to know before you set off on a tour of the Caribbean. The first in a two-part guide to adventure in the numerous coral islands of the Lesser Antilles



Geographically, the eastern Caribbean is the Lesser Antilles, a 700-mile string of islands that links Puerto Rico and the coast of South America. The islands stand in a line where the Atlantic and Caribbean tectonic plates meet — some still have active volcanoes. Many have become clad in corals over the years as the sea level rises and falls. This is what gives them the white coral sand for which the Caribbean is famous.

The islands are culturally diverse. As well as living West Indian English, in which there are distinct strains of Irish (Montserrat and Anguilla), Welsh (Trinidad) and West Country English (Barbados), you will hear French, Dutch and Creole. Caribbean faces are a mix of African, European and sometimes Indian.

Music is another strong feature of the Caribbean. The sounds of calypso, steel bands, reggae and zouk (from the French Antilles) reverberate along the island chain and you will find music played everywhere, usually at high volume. West Indians will find any excuse for a party.

In the eastern Caribbean it is possible to see from one island to the next, from Anguilla down to Grenada, almost the whole way along the island chain.

The islands are surprisingly diverse. Some are developed, with strings of hotels and restaurants, some are quiet to the point of seclusion. Such variety offers irresistible temptation to island hoppers and there are plenty of out-of-the-way places to discover.

Travelling between the islands can be fun in itself. Most people travel by little island-hopping planes, but there are other options too. Some islands are linked by ferry, which itself is a good exposure to local life, and of course the Caribbean is ideal yachting territory.



The view over Marigot Bay in St. Lucia, where the rich volcanic soil is extremely fertile and, despite rapid tourist development, there are still hidden coves to be discovered

THE two groups of islands best known to the British are the Windward and the Leeward Islands.

The Windward Islands of St. Lucia and Dominica are raindrop-shaped and about the size of the Isle of Wight, but with mountains higher than any in Britain. The volcanic soil is extremely fertile and strikingly beautiful. St. Lucia is building fast, but there are some less touristy spots in the hidden coves. Dominica, which is poor and undeveloped, has few beaches, but the rainforest is beyond compare — a supreme natural escape.

Unlike the other Leeward Islands of Antigua and Anguilla, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis have the same mountainous appearance and fertility as the volcanic Windward Islands, but they are smaller and less populous, and very welcoming and easy-going. Montserrat is gentle and undeveloped. It has few beaches or hotels, but is known for its villas. St. Kitts's best beaches, in the southeastern peninsula, are still being developed, but are still pretty sleepy. Slumberstruck Nevis has endless slowtime charm. It is connected by ferry to St. Kitts.

MOST islands have a tourist board in Britain, which will gladly send literature. It is worth listening to others who have visited the Caribbean already and spending time reading up in any books you can get hold of. Island-hoppers' tales as well as guides.



Over the sea to Union Island in the Grenadines

The *Cadogan Guide to the Caribbean* (by the author of this article: Cadogan Books, £12.99) covers all the islands of the eastern Caribbean, with sections on island life and the best bars, beach bars, restaurants and clubs. There are also practical sections on inter-island travel and where to stay. Another good source for independent travellers is *The Caribbean Islands Handbook* (Trade & Travel, £14.95).

Once you have an idea of where you would like to go, talk to a specialist, who can tell you how practical your ideas are. The travel agency Transatlantic Wings, 70 Pembroke Road, London W8 6NX (071-602 4021, fax 071-603 6101) specialises in the eastern Caribbean. It arranges transatlantic flights and can help with accommodation in reliable hotels. Most importantly, it sells Leeward Islands Air Transport tickets and will arrange itineraries for "Explorer" tickets.

FOR those who want a luxurious Caribbean break, a number of operators tailor top-of-the-range tours. Try Caribbeantours (071-581 3517) and Caribbean Connection (0244 341131). Among the eastern Caribbean's most sophisticated island retreats, the west coast of Barbados, with its superb strip of sand, has long been famed for its reliable luxury, both in the hotels and the restaurants. St. Kitts and Nevis have elegant and gracious plantation-style hotels, lost in the cane fields, still much as they were two centuries ago in the heyday of the Caribbean sugar industry. Anguilla has the finest sand of them all and some good waterfront bars and restaurants as well as some very stylish hotels. Nearby St. Barthélemy is a champagne playground as only the French could conceive. It is



Local food in a street market in St. George's, Grenada

very expensive, but offers the best of France under a tropical sun. You might also consider island resorts such as Young Island or Petit St Vincent in the Grenadines, and Guana Island, in the Virgin Islands.

THE Caribbean's "bus service" is a fleet of tiny island-hopper aeroplanes. Flying in them feels a bit like being in a roller-coaster, but they are

perfectly safe. You can reach almost all of the Caribbean islands by plane, but there are one or two pretty sporting airstrips on the smaller islands: the Dutch island of Saba has a runway shorter than most aircraft carriers', with a 100ft drop at either end. Leeward Islands Air Transport is the biggest local carrier, covering almost all the islands from Puerto Rico to Trinidad. It sells a number of tickets that enable you to stop off at

different destinations. For instance, the "Super Explorer" ticket, which costs about £240 and offers 25 destinations in one direction, with return to the point of origin, and is valid for 30 days. The "Explorer" ticket costs about £130 covers three destinations, and is valid for 21 days. Some tickets must be bought in Britain, so check with Transatlantic Wings.

BWIA, the airline of Trinidad and Tobago, offers the 30-day "Caribbean Airpass", costing about £240 and covering eight of the principal Eastern Caribbean islands. (Reservations: 071-839 8333.)

Other airlines include: Mustique Airways, covering Barbados and the Grenadines (0800 373742); Winair (from St. Maarten to the Dutch Windwards and St. Barts); Air Guadeloupe and Air Martinique (between them covering Sint. Maarten down to the Grenadines).

GETTING THERE

SCHEDULED flights to the Caribbean are expensive, but now a number of charter operators offer flight-only tickets. The main hubs are Puerto Rico, Antigua, Barbados, Trinidad, with some flights to St. Lucia and Grenada.

The best time to pick up charter seats is between January 15 and March 15 and between April 16 and June 20. Demand will probably increase between the beginning of February and the end of April because of the England cricket tour. Avoid school holidays. The summer season for flights begins in July and prices go up accordingly.

You can find some good fares, scheduled and charter, through the Caribbean flight specialist the Reunion Club (071-344 0101), which charges £5 for membership. If you book through a small travel agent, safeguard your travel by paying by credit card.

WHEN TO GO

HIGH season in the Caribbean is from January 15 to April 15: tourists fly in for the warm like migratory birds. High season means high prices in the hotels on the tourist circuit (room prices drop by as much as a third off-season). Independent book-

ings for these hotels are much more expensive than if you go on a package.

However, some mid-range hotels and most guest houses keep their prices level year round. These are usually good places to visit anyway, because the West Indians stay there. The Caribbean has never been cheap, so you should estimate to spend a minimum of about £13 per person per night in a guest house on most islands.

You can live quite cheaply if you eat in local restaurants and buy food from the markets. Local bus transport on the islands is also inexpensive.

JAMES HENDERSON
NEXT WEEK: island-hopping by boat, the carnival and the England cricket tour.



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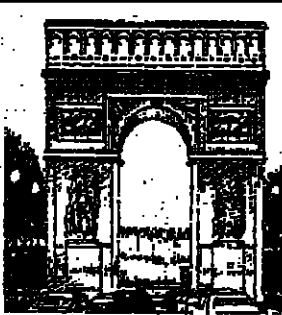
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RESTAURANT WATCH

Latest news on eating out:
who's cooking what, where

RESURFACING
Ristorante San Carlo
2 Highgate High Street,
London N6 (081-340 5823)
Mario and Mair Beccarelli,
who vacated Il Papagallo at
Waterloo to make way for
the Channel tunnel terminal,
this week reopened the
San Carlo, which has been
"dark" this past year after
being a landmark in
Highgate for more than two
decades. Mario, the chef, is
from Parma, the home of
ham and porchetta, mush-
rooms. His *à la carte* of the
traditional Italian reper-
toire is half-price until Janu-
ary 30. Thereafter, reckon
£25 a head for three courses
and wine. Open Tuesday to
Sunday, noon-3pm and
6.30-11pm.

TIMES CHANGE
Aubergine
11, Park Walk, London
SW10 0AJ (071-352 3449)
Chef Gordon Ramsay has
been joined by Jean-Claude
Breton, formerly a col-
league at Le Gavroche and
the Hotel Diva, in the south
of France, as general man-
ager. The new menu, £18
for three courses at lunch
and £26 at lunch or dinner,
include tian (mould) of scal-
lops and leeks, millefeuille
of tuna, roasted brill, and
pigeon *poché grillé*.
Aubergine now opens for
lunch on Saturdays. Closed
on Sundays.

ALL THAT JAZZ
Gumbo Ya-Ya
184a, Kensington Park
Road, London W11
(071-221 2649)
Skip Murray, who was
born and raised in New
Orleans, Louisiana, has
taken charge as head chef at
this Cajun-Creole restau-
rant serving, among other
things, gumbo, jambalaya,
shrimp, croque, po-boys,
sweet potato pecan pie and
New Orleans bread pud-
ding. The top-floor cocktail
bar serves good drinks in
56oz. goldfish bowls. Open
seven days a week, 11.30am-
11.30pm (Sunday brunch,
11.30am-4pm).

ROOKERY NOOK
Church's Mansion
Hospital Street,
Nantwich, Cheshire
(0270 625933)
Three of Amanda Latham's
four chefs, including the
head, Graham Tucker, and
her restaurant manager,
David Mayer, were recruit-
ed ("not poached") from
nearby Rookery Hall.
Church's Mansion was
formerly the home of an
Elizabethan merchant, and
later used as a girls' board-
ing school, hay store and
cattle shed before being
turned into a restaurant.
Miss Latham previously
ran a private catering busi-
ness. Tucker's specials in-
clude guinea fowl *boudin*
blanc on buttered cabbage,
pig's trotter spiked with
morels, and apricot *tarte*
tatin. Lunch £11.50 for two
courses, £14 for three. Light
lunches £3.50-£7.50. Dinner
£22 for three courses, fish
course £4.50 extra *petits*
fours £1. Open Tuesday to
Sunday, 10-11.30am (coffee,
noon-2.30pm (lunch), 3-5pm
(afternoon tea; must be
booked on Sundays) and 7-
9.30pm (dinner, except on
Sundays).

NEW BROOME'S
Carden Park
Carden, Chester
(0829 731000)
The Lyric Hotel Group has
taken over the management
of John Broome's £20 mil-
lion hotel, where the chef is
Andrew Mitchell, formerly
personal chef to King Hus-
sein, and before that at
Greywalls in Scotland and
Wood Hall, Wetherby,
Yorkshire. The new man-
agement is introducing
fixed price, three-course
menus — £9.95 for lunch,
£14.95 for dinner — from
Monday. Mitchell's cook-
ing centres on homey
British items, such as faggots,
oxtail and duck carved at
the table. Average spend a
la carte £22.50. Open noon-
2pm and 7.30-10pm, seven
days a week.

ROBIN YOUNG

Make merry on Burns' Night

How you can have a
traditional haggis
supper no matter
where you live

Nobody is more patriotic
than the Scot in exile. Give
him the slightest excuse,
plus a dram or two, and
his heart is in the Highlands. His
eyes must up like the hair rolling in
from the North Sea.

Burns' Night, the celebration of
Scotland's greatest poet on January
25, is his annual binge. Some deck
themselves out in tartan, immerse
themselves in piping, poetry and
speeches, and indulge in copious
amounts of whisky and their national
dish.

One poem about Scotland runs:
*One often yearns
For the land of Burns
The only snag is
The haggis*
Unfair, cries John Macsween,
award-winning haggis-maker, who
increases production at his Edin-
burgh butcher's shop every year to
meet growing demand. "Last year I
made 200 tonnes of haggis and this
year it will be even more. More than
50 per cent goes to England and some
of it abroad," he says.

The season begins on St Andrew's
Day at the end of November, goes
through Christmas and New Year
and works up to Burns' Night. I've
got 55 tonnes ready in the cold store,
and recently we've been working
around the clock making one-and-a-
half tonnes a day to keep up."

More and more, Scottish butchers
are catering for foreign markets. At
this time of year, convoys of refriger-
ated vans stuffed with haggis are
driven south. Post office depots all
over Scotland dispatch meaty parcels
to Caledonian societies worldwide.

No matter that haggis — which
sells for £1.50-£2.50 per pound — has
an off-putting recipe. Sheep's pluck
(lungs, heart and liver) are boiled
with beef fat for three hours, then
mixed with onions, pinhead oat-
meal and seasoning. Smaller
haggises are packed into ox intest-
ines; larger ones, up to 20lbs, are
sewn into sheep's stomachs.

Mr Macsween claims to have
invented the vegetarian haggis, com-
bining oatmeal, nuts, lentils and half
a dozen vegetables. "I did it as a one-
off a few years ago for a function
where most of the guests were
vegetarian," he says. "The BBC took
up the story, and I realised there was



John Macsween has 55 tonnes of haggis in the cold store at his Edinburgh shop, ready to meet demand from Scots at home and abroad

a market for veggie haggises and
started them as a regular line.
"I think people like to be associated
with the ritual and ceremony of
haggis — even if they don't particu-
larly like the taste. The other day a
customer told me with great pride
that he had just eaten his first haggis.
A vegetarian haggis," he said.

Whisky, of course, is an important
ingredient of a Burns' supper, which
can take a place a week or more either
side of January 25. The other essen-
tial ingredient, haggis (already
cooked) is simmered for 30 minutes
or so per lb to warm it up and served
with champit tatties (mashed pota-

toes) and bashed neeps (mashed
turnips), both flavoured with butter
and black pepper.

A Burns' supper is steeped in
tradition. It begins with the
Selkirk Grace, first used by
Burns at a dinner given by
the Earl of Selkirk 200 years ago. To
the cry of "Hail, great chieftain o' the
pudding race!", the haggis is borne in
to the skirl of the pipes. The chairman
reads the Burns' address, "To A
Haggis", and a drink is plunged into
its skin.

Haggis is not to be put aside
lightly; indeed, some say it should be

hurled away with the greatest pos-
sible force. Alan Pentegrew won a
world record by throwing a one-and-
a-half pounder 180ft 10in at Loch
Lomond in 1984. And the heaviest,
630lb sewn into eight ox stomach
linings, was made by David Hall of
Browburn, Lothian, in 1986.

Such Scottish myths would have
provided meat for conversation at
another record occasion, the longest-
ever Burns' supper. It took place ten
years ago at the Oykel Bridge Hotel,
near Lairg in Sutherland. The weather
forecast promised blizzards, so the
landlord tried to cancel the event
by phone. However, a dozen folk

"who didn't get the word" turned up
for the highlight of their social
calendar. The weather closed in,
snow ploughs could not get through.
The participants were forced to
remain for four days, living off
haggis and whisky planned for 100
people. Enough to put anyone off
haggis, you might think. Not these
stalwarts. Being on the spot, they
were ideally placed to make a
booking for the following year.

ALASDAIR RILEY

Macsween of Edinburgh, 130 Brunts-
field Place, Edinburgh EH10 4ES, 031-229
1216; fax 031-229 9102.

TIMES READER OFFER: 20 PER CENT OFF SELECTED HOLIDAYS PLUS THE CHANCE TO WIN A HOLIDAY FOR TWO IN THE CARIBBEAN

Go Places holiday offer

Following the success of last month's "Go Places" travel
offer, this week *The Times* has repeated some of the
holidays featured, giving you a second opportunity to
save 20 per cent on some very special holidays.

You and your family can save 20 per cent per person from the
cost of selected holidays worldwide. Within weeks you could be
booking an idyllic beach hotel break, a cruise in the
Mediterranean, a magnificent tour of India or an adventurous
safari in Kenya.

Two people could easily save from £100 to more than £1,000
on some holidays. Even groups are entitled to the 20 per cent
saving. Many tours include five-star accommodation, transfers
and sightseeing, even meals, the services of local tour guides,
car hire, travel insurance and tipping.

This week, *The Times* has featured all of the holidays offered
by the participating tour operators in this offer. Today readers
are offered 20 per cent off the holidays shown below from
Caribours. For further details, a brochure and a booking form,
simply telephone 071-873 5005 or send a written request to: *The*
Times Travel Offer, Cox & Kings, 45 Buckingham Gate,
London, SW1E 6AF, specifying which tour you are interested in.

Getting your discount is so simple: today and all this week
special tokens have appeared in *The Times* — six tokens in
total. You need collect only three tokens to qualify for your 20
per cent discount. The discount applies to any number of people
booking on any one tour operator's booking form.
● The holidays featured are from February 1994 to the end of
December 1994, and you can choose any number of holidays,
providing you have collected three tokens per holiday.
● The 20 per cent discount will apply to any holiday featured
with no restriction on price.
● When you have chosen your holiday, complete the relevant
tour operator's booking form and send it with the required
deposit and three *Times* tokens to: *The Times* Travel Offer, Cox
& Kings Travel, St James Court, Buckingham Gate, London,
SW1E 6AF. Bookings must be received by February 28, 1994.
● Terms and conditions as published in *The Times* from
Monday to Friday this week.

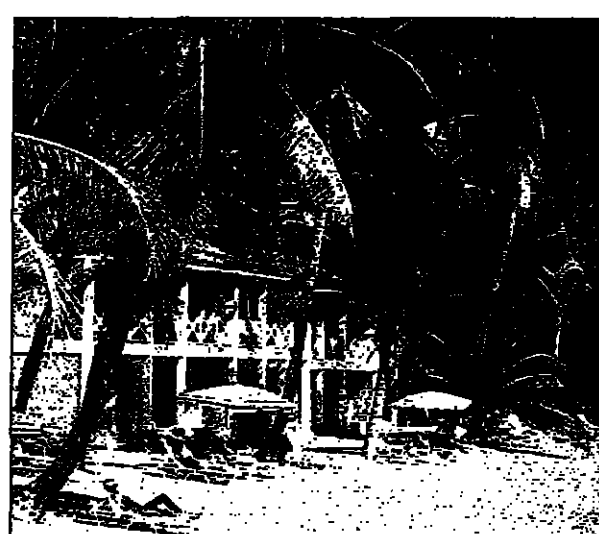
TOKEN No 6

This is your sixth token.
There has been
a token printed
every day this week.
Six in total.
You need collect
only three

GO
PLACES



From top, clockwise: Peter Island, British Virgin Islands; Antigua; Bridgetown and Royal Pavilion, Barbados



Enjoy the Caribbean

Today is the final day of our fabulous holiday
competition and readers have the opportunity to win
any one of the five holidays we have offered each day
this week plus the chance of winning our accumulator
competition.

Enter Day 1 competition and you and a partner could be
cruising round the Mediterranean with Swan Hellenic; Day 2
will take you on a luxury eight-day tour of India with Cox &
Kings; Day 3 and you could be riding through the Wild West
with Trek America; Day 4 gives you the chance to enjoy a luxury
tour of Efordland with Insight Holidays; and Day 5 will win you
a nine-day safari in Kenya with Carver.

To enter the daily competitions simply answer the three
relevant daily questions reprinted below. You may enter all five
daily competitions, but entries should all be on separate
postcards, marked clearly "Day 1", "Day 2" and so on. Write
your answers on a postcard with your name and address and
send it to: *The Times*, Holiday Competition, PO Box 223,
Mitcham, Surrey CR4 1YF to arrive no later than February 2,
1994. The winners will be selected from all correct entries
received by the closing date and notified by post.

To enter our accumulator competition simply answer all the
questions published today. Make a note of the first letter of each
answer this will reveal a phrase, the answer to the accumulator
competition. The prize is a luxurious all-inclusive beach holiday
on the Caribbean Island of St Lucia with Caribours. Your
holiday prize includes return flights with British Airways, seven
nights oceanview accommodation at Le Sport Hotel, three
meals daily and unlimited bar drinks and wine with lunch and
dinner. You can also enjoy complimentary tennis, golf, and
watersports including windsurfing, snorkeling and scuba
diving, plus extensive beauty treatments at the hotel
thalassotherapy centre. Write the answer on a postcard and
send it with your name and address to: *The Times* Accumulator
Competition, P O Box 223, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 1YF. The
winner will be selected from all correct entries received by the
closing date, February 2, 1994.

Normal *Times* Newspaper competition rules apply.

ALL THE QUESTIONS

DAY 1 QUESTIONS

- A Where in Turkey will you find the Library of Celsus?
- B Which large Italian city is close to Pompeii?
- C After which saint were the knights of Rhodes named?

DAY 2 QUESTIONS

- A Part of which major river forms the Colombia-Venezuela boundary?
- B On which peninsula was the last outpost of the Mayans?
- C In which country is the highest active volcano in South America?

DAY 3 QUESTIONS

- A Which mountains stretch from the Gulf of St Lawrence to Alabama?
- B On which river does Roanoke, Virginia, stand?
- C Of which US state is Boise the capital?

DAY 4 QUESTIONS

- A What is the capital of Switzerland?
- B Which Portuguese river flows into the "Sea of Straw"?
- C Which Bavarian town is famous for its Passion play?

DAY 5 QUESTIONS

- A Of which African country was Idi Amin dictator?
- B What country's currency is abbreviated to Rwf?
- C What was the former name of Zimbabwe's capital city?

TODAY'S FEATURED OPERATOR: CARIBOURS

BARBADOS: Glitter Bay. In
the 1930s the Glitter Bay
Estate was the home of Sir
Edward Cunard who entertain-
ed guests on the magnifi-
cent lawns which are now
part of the resort. The original
Great House still stands and
the luxurious Glitter Bay
delights in its reputation as
one of the best Caribbean
hotels.
British Airways departures
from London Gatwick on 4, 5,
March 1994. Two weeks ex-
cluding meals from £1,938
(down from £2,423) subject to
rooms selected.
Save from £485

BARBADOS: Royal Pavilion.
A luxury hotel with
stylish accommodation, im-
peccable service and a de-
lightful tropical beach setting
— probably one of the most
sought after Caribbean
locations.

British Airways departures
from London Gatwick on 4, 5,
March 1994. Two weeks ex-
cluding meals from £2,376
(down from £2,970) in ocean-
front junior suite.
Save from £594

ST LUCIA: Le Sport. The
hotel is set in a secluded cove
on the northwest coast of St

Lucia. Watersports and beau-
ty treatments are all included.
British Airways departures
from London Gatwick on 15,
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CARIBOURS

Checkout trail to supper

In a new series, Frances Bissell seeks out gastronomic surprises at the supermarket

I AM beginning to discover why people usually shop at the same supermarket. Ever since we decided to do without a car a few years ago, I have shopped locally. I am lucky to be able to do this. It is not stressful, nor is it too time-consuming. But there are many people who would disagree and who swear by the weekly or even monthly shop at the local supermarket.

Of course, I recognise that for many there is no alternative to the supermarket, whether because of price, availability or convenience. Now, for the next few weeks, I have decided to join that band. However, instead of restricting myself to one store, I shall be sampling a number of supermarket chains, starting today with Waitrose.

Without a car, I cannot manage more than a couple of carrier bags, so rather than doing a weekly shop, I shall be buying for specific meals. These I shall call supermarket suppers — or supermarket Sunday lunches.

I am already discovering the stress of being in a new supermarket and not knowing where things are and the constant pressure to keep moving towards the checkout. Woe betide you if you change your mind mid-stream and try to turn back, having just decided that you will after all try those plump red tomatoes "specially grown for flavour".

Just a short bus ride from my house is a large branch of Waitrose, and I have discovered that if I go there on Thursdays, I can get Arctic char at the fish counter (£3.75 a lb for the whole fish and £5.25 a lb for fillets), flown in from Iceland, where it is farmed. I shall cook the fish just before the supper I am planning, but the main course, a mixed meat stew, I shall cook the day before. In the game season, you will find packets of fresh game for casserole (£2.99 a lb), consisting of pheasant, venison and hare. Out of season, Country Casserole packs include rabbit, farmed venison and pigeon.

Further along the cabinet, turkey is available in all manner of value-added disguises, ranging from £1.99 to £3.39 a lb, diced turkey for casseroles, turkey strips for "stroganoff" or stir-fry, cubes of turkey threaded on kebabs with pork and peppers, and turkey thigh steaks with a cranberry stuffing.

There is British pork (£2.59 a lb) and "farmhouse" pork (£1.79 a lb)

The TIMES COOK

for boneless leg roasts. You pay more for meat reared to higher, and thus more costly, standards. Not all Waitrose meats are in neat shrink-wrapped packages. There is a butcher's counter, which I like because it sells the "lesser" cuts, such as ox tail and lamb shoulder shanks, as well as prime cuts and joints to order.

I skim the dairy cabinet and will not be caught again by the Müller Thick and Creamy Yoghurt. Above it, below it, and next to it are ranges of plain natural yoghurt, which led me to assume that it was too. When I arrived home, and had a closer look at the label, it had yoghurt, cream, glucose thickener, gelatine and unspecified flavouring.

White chocolate bars go into my shopping basket as a matter of course. Own label at 75p for 100g is a good buy. I use it for mousses, ice creams or in today's toffee-cake recipe. The French-made plain chocolate is good too, with 72 per cent cocoa solids. Not much else tempts me, except unsprayed lemons from Spain (89p for four), La Ratte and Belle de Fontenay potatoes at 95p for 500g and new-crop forced rhubarb for 89p a lb.



On my way to the checkout counter, I also pick up ingredients for a fast supper, prawns to fry in one of the new own-label extra-virgin olive oils, either Spanish or Greek, at £2.49 for 500ml. There is a good range of dried pasta from Italy, and I choose the more unusual orzo (69p for 500g), which I will cook and serve with broccoli florets, garlic and crushed anchovies. Pudding is to be sliced mango served with a scoop of lemon sorbet.

To accompany the more elaborate meal that I am planning for the next day, I choose the 1991 Cosme Palacio Rioja Blanco (£4.75), made in the traditional style with some oak ageing. To go with the casserole, I select the 1988 Vina Alberdi Rioja Crianza, a full, ripe and mature Rioja, also aged in oak. I hesitate between two favourite



sweet wines to go with the toffee cake, a 1990 Bastor Lamontagne for £7.75 a half bottle and a 1983 Château des Coulinats, Ste Croix du Mont.

Then I have to go all the way back to the beginning because I have forgotten the fresh mint for the sauce I want to serve with the char. During the past year or so, my favourite method of cooking the more delicate fish fillets has been with a mint sauce, not the crude sweet and sour mint sauce so favoured with lamb, but mint leaves crushed with a little salt in a mortar and stirred into crème fraîche and fish stock. It is an exquisite combination, which I first tried with the Arctic char, but then with wild salmon and red mullet in due season.

Arctic char with mint sauce
(serves 6)
6.5-oz/140-170g Arctic char fillets
freshly ground black pepper
fine sea salt
1 fresh lime
Sauce
½ pt/500ml cream, crushed with about
½ oz/15g fresh mint leaves, plus extra
for garnish
3-4 tbsp crème fraîche
¼ pt/100ml each white wine and fish,
chicken or vegetable stock

Season the fish on both sides with salt and pepper. Grate lime zest on to the fish flesh, and squeeze on just a little lime juice, keeping the rest for a salad dressing. Leave for 20 minutes, and then heat a large

well-greased or non-stick pan, and cook the fish, skin side down, for about five minutes, when the skin will be quite crisp. Turn the fish over with a spatula, and cook the underside for a minute or two. Transfer the fish to warm plates, and pour the stock into the pan to reduce it. Stir in the crushed mint leaves and crème fraîche. Season with a dash of lime juice and a little pepper, if liked, and pour around the fish fillets. The crisp skin is very good to eat.

This next recipe is an immensely versatile dish, using the Country Casserole mix, although other combinations of meat and game can be used. I like to add plenty of spices and pepper to the casserole, but no single one dominates. Each simply adds to the layers of flavour.

Serve the casserole with jacket potatoes, put in the oven at the same time. Root vegetables or green vegetables will accompany it very well too. Sometimes I serve it with a crumble, sometimes with a herb cobbler topping, and sometimes with a crust of flaky pastry. Leftovers, chopped up and mixed with plenty of gravy, make a fine sauce for chunky pasta. Without the gravy, it makes good potted game, mixed with softened butter, spices and little port or madeira.

Peppered country casserole
(serves 6 plus leftovers)
3lb/1.35kg meat, off the bone
2 onions, peeled and chopped or sliced
2 tbsp olive oil

1 pinch of mace, cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg
grating of nutmeg
1 level tsp freshly ground black pepper
1½ oz/50g square of bitter chocolate
1pt/500ml good dry red wine
½ pt/250ml game or other meat stock
2 bay leaves
sprig of thyme
watercress for garnish

Make sure the meat is of roughly even-sized pieces. Dry them thoroughly. Brown the onion in the olive oil, and transfer it to a casserole. Brown the meat in batches, and transfer also to the casserole. Add the spices, chocolate, and half the wine, to the pan. Bring to the boil, scrape up any residues stuck to the pan, and then add the remaining wine and stock. Bring to a full boil, pour it over the meat, tuck in the herbs, cover, and cook in a preheated oven at 150C/300F, gas mark 2, for about two hours, or until the meat is tender. Serve from an earthenware dish, garnished with a sprig or two of watercress. To serve after the meat, perhaps with cheese, I suggest a green salad with a tarragon and walnut dressing.

Tarragon and walnut dressing
(makes enough for a salad for 6)
½ tsp coarse sea salt
several sprigs French tarragon
2 tbsp chopped walnuts
1 tbsp lime juice
5-6 tbsp walnut oil

Crush salt and tarragon in a mortar. When reduced to paste, add the walnuts. Crush these further, add the lime, and gradually, the walnut oil. Spoon it over the salad and fold until well-coated.

Swirled chocolate toffee cake
(serves 6 to 8)
Shortbread base
4oz/110g unsalted butter, softened
2oz/60g caster sugar
6oz/170g plain flour
Topping
2tbsp golden syrup

To make the toffee, put the golden syrup and condensed milk into a saucepan, bring to the boil and boil for precisely seven minutes, stirring all the time. Spread the mixture over the shortbread, and allow it to cool. Melt the chocolate in two bowls or small heatproof jugs standing in a frying pan of hot water set over a low heat. Pour the chocolate, at random over the cooled toffee, swirling it into a pattern with a spoon or fork. Mark into small triangles, squares or fingers before the chocolate has set. Cut when cold. It is a very rich pudding, one my brother and I used to love as children when it was topped with milk chocolate, but which finds adult favour now.

Hot fruit salad
(serves 6-8)

As an alternative dessert, since the oven will be on for the casserole, put the contents of a couple of packets of mixed whole dried fruit in a lidded enamel or earthenware casserole, together with cinnamon, cloves, a twist of lemon or orange zest, a bottle of good dry red wine, or a couple of pints of freshly made tea, such as jasmine or Earl Grey. Cook until the fruit is tender, and serve the fruit compote warm with very cold yoghurt or crème fraîche and some toasted flaked almonds.

● Frances Bissell shopped at Waitrose in Finchley Road, London NW3 0JF. Waitrose's headquarters customer service telephone number is 0344 424680.

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DRISCOLL'S THE BURN'S

Chef: Ralph Porciani, 30. Born: Dumbarton, Dumbartonshire.

Restaurant: Executive chef of the Forte Grand Balmoral, Edinburgh (031-558 2414). He will be in London from tomorrow staging a Scottish promotion in the Café Royal's Brasserie and providing the Burns' Night dinner in the Grill Room (071-437 9089).

Present: Hotfooting it back from Germany, after another promotion.

Past: His family has been running fish and chip shops since 1905. After stints at Le Meridien, Piccadilly, and with Gerald Milson at La Tulbooth in Essex, he became executive chef at the Craigdarroch timeshare resort on Royal Deeside before taking over at the Balmoral.

Future: "I would like eventually to be running a place with two or three restaurants."

Personal: "I spend my spare time walking my dog and playing with my two young sons."

Dish: Fillet of Scotch beef "Auld Reekie", served on a cushion of skillets (pinhead oatmeal and onion purée tied in goose fat) and topped with a Loch Fyne oyster, featured in the Burns' Night dinner (202 for four courses), and appearing as a daily special in the Brasserie (£14.75 for two courses).

ROBIN YOUNG

ALL ABOARD for the very good, if not great 1992 white burgundy vintage. Buying burgundy en primeur, or early on when the wines are still unproven, but bottled or even still in the barrel, is always risky. Yet the 1992 burgundies are the right price and the right quality. Ignore them and you will miss out.

For the impecunious, the 1992 burgundies will be the only French wine worth buying en primeur in 1994. With little to enthuse over among the 1992 vintages, and rhymes, burgundy should be served by the light of this spring. In any event, burgundy is always a special case. The Burgundy region is tiny compared with Bordeaux and the Rhône. The leading growers' plots are often just a few rows of the very best vineyards, so it is not hard to understand why the important 1992 burgundy vintage is worth buying.

Cynics should also note that because of worldwide demand and the dearth of top domaine-bottled burgundies, about half the wines on the specialists' lists now will not

Jane MacQuitty hails a 1992 vintage

Fine burgundy at a great price

be seen here again. And despite my devotion to New World wines, I must admit that when France and the Côte d'Or get it right, it is impossible to beat the majesty of a rich, complex burgundy. It is doubly tempting now that a new generation of young wine-makers, using modern equipment, are getting the best from the burgundy vines. In many ways, 1992 is the first vintage of the modern burgundy era, when all these factors have come together.

The other advantage of the 1992 vintage is its price. France has just started to experience a recession and 1992's burgundy prices were 23 per cent down at the important annual Hospices de Beaune sale. 1993's were down by 21 per cent, and there were even greater price falls for vintages from 1991 and 1990. Most British-based burgundy specialists have therefore dropped their 1992 burgundy prices by almost 20 per cent on their last important en primeur burgundy campaign, which was for the 1990 vintage.

the source of Burgundy's greatest reds, did not start harvesting until September 18 and was caught by rain on September 22 and 23, followed by a few dry, hot days, and heavy rain again from September 26.

As a result, a proportion of diffuse, pale, big-yield wines has been made in both regions. Nevertheless, of more than 100 wines of this vintage that I have tasted so far, albeit mostly the top growers' wines, I have found the quality to be remarkably consistent.

In my tasting book, this is the year in which white-burgundy growers from regions as diverse as Chablis, Mâconnais and the Côte Chalonnaise have taken the opportunity to produce everything from great Bourgogne blanc right up to the top dogs of Chevalier-Montrachet and the like.

The whites of 1992 are characterised by balance, breeding, freshness and a wonderful perfumed aromatic quality, whose floral, citrusy elegance I found a welcome change after other great white burgundy vintages, such as the rich and powerful 1989. The 1992 whites are certainly one of the best of the past 15 vintages.

BEST BUYS

The best 1992 Burgundy buys

WHITE:

- Puligny-Montrachet, Champgains, Michel Bouzereau: Morris & Verdin, 28 Churton Street, London SW1 (071-630 8888), £192. Lovely, leafy, restrained elegant flavours.
- Chassagne-Montrachet, 1er Cru Clos St Jean, Blain-Gagnard: Bibendum, 113 Regent's Park Road, London NW1 (071-722 5577), £171. Elegant, flowery, perfumed chardonnay finesse.
- Puligny-Montrachet, Jean-Marc Boillot: Bibendum, £185. Delicious, full, floral, pineapple fruit.
- Meursault, 1er Cru Les Charmes, Alain Coche-Bizonard: Bibendum, £170. Buttery, elegant, citrusy style.
- Corton-Charlemagne, Grand Cru, Domaine Rollin: Justerini & Brooks, £309.60. 61 St James's Street, London SW1. Elegant, rich, ripe, nutty fruit.
- Puligny-Montrachet, Etienne Sauzet, 1er Cru Les Referts: Justerini & Brooks (071-493 8721), £241.20. Ripe, toasty, nutty class.

R&D:

- Bourgogne Les Bons Batons, Patrice Rion: Morris & Verdin, £63. Star Bourgogne rouge buy with heaps of rich, intoxicating, damson plum fruit.
- Echézeaux, Grand Cru, Georges Jayer: Bibendum, £345; Justerini & Brooks, £339. Wonderful rich, ripe strawberry and cherry finesse.
- Echézeaux, Grand Cru, Emmanuel Rouget: Bibendum, £315; Justerini & Brooks, £319.80. Spicy, full, deep strawberry and plum sensation. (Prices are in bond and exclusive of value-added tax.)

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Why mother and crew are in the same boat

In the last of our series on families that share a passion for sport, a single mother teaches her children to canoe

Gill Berrow believes she has found the ideal way to encourage her children to have fun and to learn independence at the same time. She lets them, literally, paddle their own canoe.

For a single parent with two small children, finding an activity that the whole family can pursue, and one that the children will still enjoy as they grow older, is tricky.

Canoeing, with its scope for progressing from gentle paddling in a large pond to shooting rapids on a fast-flowing river, fits the bill nicely. And, as there is hardly a lake, former gravel pit, or once-derelict dock in Britain that does not have a canoe club, it is becoming one of the most accessible of sports.

"The secret with children is timing," says Mrs Berrow, 38, who separated from her husband four years ago and is now divorced. "You have to do only so much, to match their concentration span, and then let them move on to something else."

"Canoeing is a very simple sport, which is one of the reasons it appeals to children. Unlike sports which have techniques to master, there are only a few basic things to learn. Children like the fact that they can get straight into a boat and just do it."

Andrew, her four-year-old son, started as a canoe passenger when he was a baby. Now, on a calm day, he can manage to paddle a couple of miles. Fiona, eight, is already competent enough to steer and has mastered her capsizing drill in a swimming pool, although so far she has not needed to use it. Last year, she and her mother shot the rapids on the Tay. "For a beginner it was exciting," Mrs Berrow says. "There were lots of small waves and rocks to avoid but it was quite safe. Deep water is safer than shallow water. In deep water you are wearing a buoyancy aid so you can't drown, whereas if there is hardly any water, you are generally more worried about getting hurt on the rocks."

"We usually all go together and I put Fiona in the front."



Gill Berrow setting off on a family canoeing adventure with Fiona, eight, and Andrew, four

'Canoeing is a very simple sport, which is one of the reasons it appeals to children. They like the fact that they can get straight into a boat and just do it'

Andrew, in the middle and I sit at the back where I can see what is going on. They wear plenty of warm clothes and an all-in-one waterproof as well as their buoyancy aids. I always carry a supply of snacks. At this time of year when it is colder and there is not much light left, we go straight after school and I prepare a picnic so we have tea afloat, which is fun.

"One of the things they love best is exploring for a day. Fiona is a great *Swallows and Amazons* fan and it is easy to get the spirit of adventure when you are in the canoe. You can imagine you are an explorer when you go to

an island or down a stretch of river where people don't normally go. Paddling their own canoe gives them a feeling of independence. Making the boat travel through the water and getting it to go where they

want gives them a chance to do something for themselves, which is very satisfying. As well as being healthy exercise, it is interesting and definitely not passive. I am probably extreme. I don't watch television and although I wouldn't ban it, I prefer to do active things with the children.

"Being in a canoe naturally draws you closer together so you get a feeling of companionship, of sharing an activity, and that is really important to all of us. The children also learn that we are relying on each other, that we are operating as a team. That is a valuable bonding experience."

"They like to take their share of responsibility when we are preparing to go out, by carrying rucksacks and so on. The only thing I find hard to do on my own is loading the canoe on top of the car. Although Fiona can help me to carry it into the water, and Andrew tries to help, too, they can't help me to hoist it up. I'm looking forward to the day when they are big enough to do that."

Fiona has her own canoe, specially made for a child and measuring 8ft with a broad beam making it stable and safe. She first learnt to paddle it at the water's edge when she was three. "It came up for sale, and because such an exceptionally small canoe, or kayak as it ought to be called, is a rarity, I couldn't resist it," Mrs Berrow says.

A second-hand starter kayak made of fibreglass can be bought for as little as £50; one made of polyethylene costs about £150. A second-hand canoe can be bought for £100, a third of the price of a new one. Paddles cost from £20 each. Prices for courses vary but canoeing is one of the cheapest of all outdoor activities. A beginner's course of four three-hour lessons could cost as little as £30, including hire of the equipment.

The British Canoe Union has 8,500 registered instructors teaching 588,000 people a year. However, it is estimated that three times that number of instructors who have not qualified through the union take canoe classes, so the number of paddlers having a go each year is probably about 1.5 million. Regular canoeists who own their own boats number about 100,000.

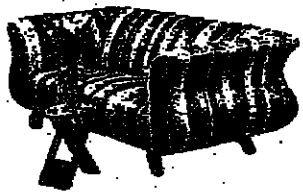
Mrs Berrow teaches climbing, windsurfing, hill-walking, sailing and canoeing, so she does have a head start when it comes to encouraging the children to join her. But she insists that canoeing is an ideal sport, especially for a single parent, as a way of overcoming that, shrinking family feeling. "Because I am so aware of the difficulties of being in a single-parent family, I have made a tremendous effort to give the children my undivided attention for certain periods and to do something special with them. They know it is our time together and is sacrosanct. If you are busy, like I am, it is very easy to let other things encroach on the time you spend with your children."

HEATHER KIRBY

For information about canoeing write to: British Canoe Union, John Dunderidge House, Adbolton Lane, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 5AS (0602 821100).



Left: Pauline and Andrew Purves in their specialist furniture and furnishings shop, Purves & Purves, in central London. Mrs Purves says she is now a jack-of-all-trades and has to tackle the cleaning as well as selling the furniture. Their small three-seater Isis sofa (below) costs £795 without covers. The fabric used here is Collier Campbell woodgrain stripe, making the total price £1,026.



Below: Johnnie Boden, a former stockbroker who now runs a mail-order catalogue of classic English clothes for men and women, says that moving from a profession into retail can come as a shock. "There's a different mentality and it takes a while to understand this."



Johnnie Boden took a 30 per cent pay cut when he left his job as a stockbroker to set up a mail order business. Madeleine Hamilton, a former solicitor, saw her income halve when she went into the rag trade. Yet neither regrets the move. They are part of the growing number of professionals who are leaving unfulfilling careers for the challenge of self-employment in a trade.

Even today, it is a move that requires courage and commitment, but it is not as difficult as it once was. The old stigma associated with shifting from a profession into trade has disappeared, says Una-Mary Parker, a former editor of the *Tatler* social column. "It has become rather smart to turn to trade. With the recession and the 'Lloyd's crash' so many have had to adopt a different lifestyle that it's now chic to change your status."

Tatler's present editor, Jane Procter, says: "There's no snob status attached to a profession any more. Ten years ago *Tatler* ran a column called 'Nobs with Yob Jobs', which was very much the gentleman-gardener syndrome. Now it's not a novelty. We've just had our house done up by a bunch of old Etonians, and I have a friend, a former stockbroker, who is one of London's best trompe l'oeil artists."

Ms Hamilton, 29, says that her decision to go into the rag trade brought a mixed reaction from friends and former colleagues. "At first they thought I was mad. Now I think they're jealous. But they seem to believe that your time is your own when you're self-employed and do not realise how much hard work it is."

She originally trained as a solicitor in England and France and worked for four years with the City law firm Frere Cholemeley. She now designs and manufactures the type of hard-wearing, stylish white blouses that were hard to find when she needed them for her legal work.

She sells to upmarket boutiques and by mail order. Considering her lack of previous experience or knowledge of the industry, her success has been remarkable. In her second year of trading she has trebled her gross turnover, although her previous income has halved.

"I had thought law was the career for me. But it was too mapped out and I would have hated to combine running a family with the hours demanded by corporate law. I

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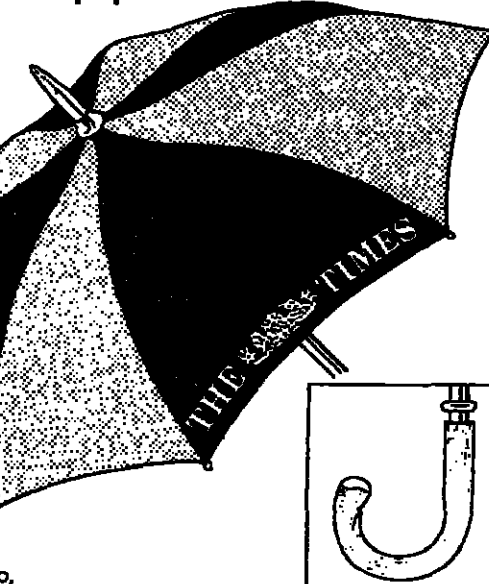
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A look at international trends and trend-setters

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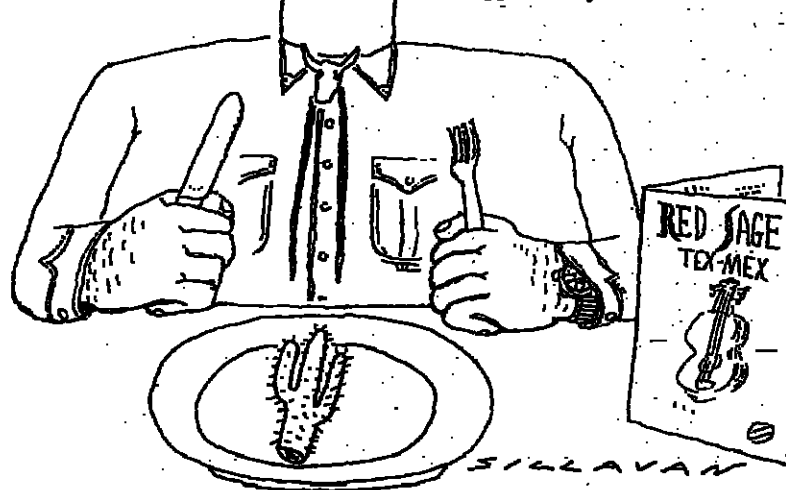
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THE CULT
Far more exciting than a *Blue Peter* bring-and-buy sale is the Metropolitan Police Department gun-exchange scheme. As St Valentine's Day approaches, swap your semi-automatic for gift certificates which can buy shoes, clothes and compact discs for that special someone.

THE GEAR I
The best-dressed people in the capital are those on diplomatic tours: New York chic has yet to infiltrate federal government. Washington men sport coiffured hair as a distraction from the boring suits. As for the women, try to imagine multiples of Hillary. Only those in the Clinton Common Room are allowed to dress like freshmen, and then only if they behave in an enervated, upbeat, we-really-are-making-policy way.



THE CATERERS
Tourists trek to Planet Hollywood, but Washingtonians choose the Occidental Grill or the nouvelle TexMex cuisine of Red Sage, where the Bushes and the Clintons have dined. For informal, but refined palates, Dean and Deluca in Georgetown sells deli goodies, and the terrace café serves grand sarnies for serious Ralph Lauren and cappuccino aficionados.



THE GEAR II
Students flock to the Banana Republic store, where the Princess of Wales snapped up some jeans, and to Urban Outfitters, where grunge meets environmentally/politically correct furnishings. J. Crew is the place for students with AmEx accounts.

THE CROWD
Policy advisers meet gentleman journalists and Georgetown academia over canapés at embassy thrashers – and, of course, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the deposed president of Haiti; the Mars Family; Crown Prince Felipe of Spain; and the odd Rockefeller or two.

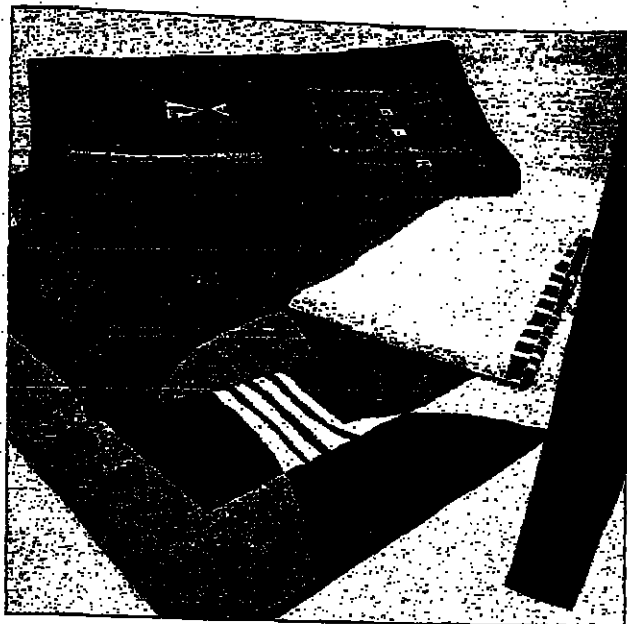
THE CAUSE
Does one or doesn't one give to the homeless on every street corner? Washingtonians ask themselves this question, as they try to distinguish the genuinely destitute from aggressive beggars.

THE FILM
Washington is currently Hollywood's darling, with *In the Line of Fire*, *Dave* and *The Pelican Brief* paying homage to bungling bureaucrats and protocol. Squeals can be heard as White House staffers spot themselves in *The War Room*, a hip documentary filmed during the election campaign, in which harassed Democrats do their bit for the party under the command of Washington's most eligible bachelor, George Stephanopoulos.

HILLARY'S HOUSE
When visiting the First Home, do not stifle if you see mice – the First Cat, Socks, has been confined to the basement after clawing at antique chairs. Outside the White House is the "photo stop", where news fans can do Gavin Esler impressions.

SARAH HARTLEY

Pure wool hand-tufted rugs from a selection designed by Kate Blee and Jasia Szersynska in bold, modern designs and on sale at the furnishing specialists, Purves & Purves. Prices start from £395 a rug.

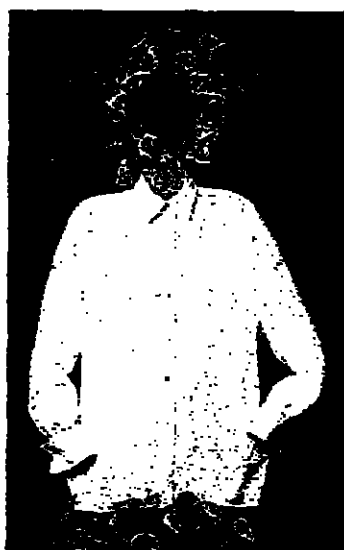


Left: Chris Wornell, a self-taught jeweller, shows Debbie Lowe, a potential purchaser, his hand-crafted amethyst and peridot gem tree, £29.99. Peridot and carnelian gem tree (far left), £13.99.



Johnnie Boden shirts and ties (from far left): Windowpane cotton shirt in burgundy, navy or yellow check, £38, shown with printed silk Starry tie, £24; Herringbone cotton shirt in blue, shown with printed silk Stars & Stripes tie, £28; Prince of Wales cotton shirt in blue or red, £38, shown with printed silk Lozenge tie, £18, and Moon & Stars woven silk tie, £36. P&P £4.

Below left: former lawyer, Madeline Hamilton, wearing a cotton lumberjack-style over-shirt, £49, available by mail order from her shopping-by-post collection. Below: Jacinta shirt, in 100 per cent two-fold cotton poplin with mother-of-pearl buttons, costs £49.50. Left: Lily, a lined black wool crepe jacket with mandarin collar, £165. P&P £2.50.



Below: Tim and Marissa Weatherhead in their shop, Onglaze, in central London, where china is hand-painted on site. Left: shallow bowl in Spanish rose design, £32. Bottom: a "mix 'n' match" service, including coffee pot, £46; mugs, £8 each; coffee cup and saucer, £12.50; sugar bowl, £13.50.



What makes a lawyer resign to go into trade?

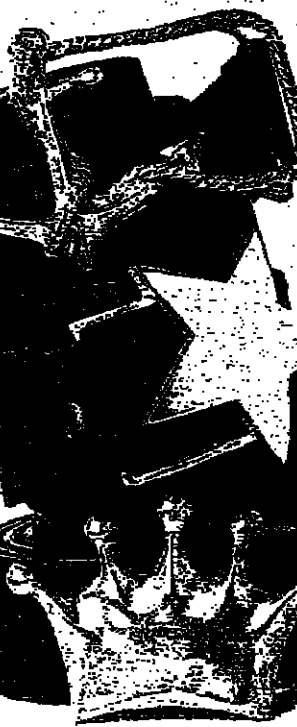
still work long hours but feel I have much more control over my time. I find the work fulfilling and it was a challenge to learn everything from scratch.

"I drew up a list of things that interested me and fashion came top. I started selling from home to friends in 1991 then branched into mail order." She now has a database of 8,000 clients and a retail outlet in Canary Wharf in London's Docklands. "I've experienced the usual problems women face when they set up in business alone. Typically, the banks did not respond well when I approached them as a designer, but when I said I was a solicitor they were more positive," she says.

"I've had to learn to be tough, as the rag trade is very male-orientated and unprofessional compared with law. Everything is always delivered late. I've also had to adapt my manner when dealing with cloth suppliers and manufacturers and I find that my accent varies accordingly. But they respect my professionalism in giving clear instructions and paying invoices on time."

Mr Boden, a 32-year-old former stockbroker, whose sixth mail order fashion catalogue was recently sent to 17,000 customers, agrees that moving from a profession into retail can come as a shock. "Historically, the calibre of those in trade is lower than those in the City in terms of honesty, trustworthiness and ability to work hard," he says. "One thing I miss about the City is the assurance 'my word is my bond'. It's not at all like that in the rag trade. There's a different mentality and it takes a while to understand this. There are a lot of sharks, so suppliers are understandably cautious. They like to see the colour of your money, and it can be difficult to get credit. I find it hard to strike a balance between being aggressive and

Professionals are finding job satisfaction in other fields



Selection of black leather belts, £25 each plus £4 p&p, from the Boden catalogue

persistent or gently encouraging. In the City it's clearer how you should behave."

Mr Boden says that working for himself has been a financial strain. "My income has been cut by about a third, and losing all my capital - something you don't experience in a salaried job. It's a sobering thought, but one which makes you keen to succeed."

Although Tim Weatherhead's income has risen by about 20 per cent since he became self-employed, it was his change in status that proved a problem. His family had difficulty accepting his deci-

sion to leave teaching after three years in the art department at St Paul's School, London, so that he could open a shop called Onglaze, selling china hand-painted by himself and his wife, Marissa. "The family recognised our need for creativity, but thought it foolish to turn down the security of salary and status when we had one child and another on the way," he says.

Frustrated with teaching's conveyor-belt system, Mr Weatherhead, 29, was determined to become self-employed and to finance his artistic work. "Although it's good practice for my own painting, and I get personal satisfaction from the design element, it was a difficult decision to switch from teaching, and there are people I miss from my professional life. Running a business can be lonely."

He, too, had trouble persuading a bank to back him. "There were a lot of questions about my business acumen and three banks turned me down because I hadn't been in business before," he says.

Mr Weatherhead finds that "the old boy network is as persuasive when you're buying china as in any other job. At first it was a struggle to find out about suppliers and manufacturers but once you've been accepted, people help."

A voluntary redundancy pay-off from NatWest insurance services, where he had worked for 23 years, financed Chris Wornell's jewellery-making venture. Having spent six years selling semi-precious necklaces, bracelets and earrings at country craft shows, Mr Wornell, 47, has turned this hobby into a business. "I'm self-taught, and it didn't need much investment in tools," he says. "When I left the bank I was prepared for quite a drop in income - about half in my first year of trading - in return for the creative interest

and being my own boss. There are always expenses involved in establishing a business, but I hope eventually to get roughly my previous income."

I've had no adverse comments about switching from a profession to a trade: the snob aspect has come more from other craftspeople assessing the calibre of my work."

Pauline Purves, 31, also found the constraints of working for a large organisation frustrating and, after a break to have her first child, swapped her job as a marketing consultant with the TSB for retailing. Now she and her husband, Andrew, run Purves & Purves, a shop selling contemporary furniture and furnishings in Tottenham Court Road, central London.

"In my previous job I was treated as a professional; now I'm a jack-of-all-trades and I roll up my sleeves and get on with the cleaning as well as the selling."

So far, the couple has experienced a 40 per cent drop in personal income. "While setting up we have put personal funds into the business, but now that it is profitable we can start withdrawing our directors' loan," Mrs Purves says.

At present, the Purveses are busy building up the business, but in a couple of years will be free to do more buying trips, which they both enjoy. "And being self-employed means that if we don't get into the shop until 10am, because of the children, it no longer matters because we have staff who we can rely on to open at 9.30am," Mrs Purves says.

"Our friends thought we were mad to set up in a recession, especially as I'd had our second child two weeks before we opened last year. But we felt the time was right. It's a risk, but what makes it exciting is having one's finger on the pulse in a way that was never possible working for someone else."

NICOLE SWENGLEY

● Madeline Hamilton, The White Shirt Collection, 57 Thornhill Road, London N1 1UT 071-700 5900. Johnnie Boden, Boden, 2 Pembroke Buildings, Cumberland Park, Scrabble Lane, London NW10 6RE 081-944 2632. Tim Weatherhead, Onglaze, 46 Harrington Road, London SW7 3ND 071-823 8483. Chris Wornell, 5 Eastover Close, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol BS9 3JQ 0272 400430. Pauline and Andrew Purves, Purves & Purves, 83 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1P 9HD 071-580 8223.

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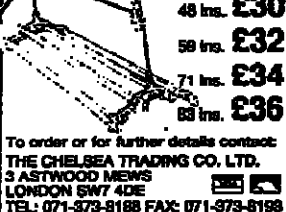
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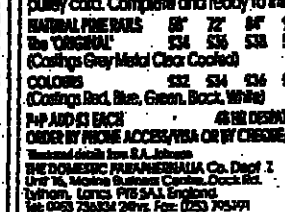
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Dry rot may not be such bad news after all. Marcus Binney reports on a new attitude to treatment of the fungus

Hounds on the trail of dry rot

Dry rot has replaced death-watch beetle as the number one scourge of old buildings. The fungus, which can grow through plaster, brickwork and masonry, is able to extend several yards from its food source, producing strands up to 1/4 in in diameter to attack sound timber.

When this happens, it seems as though the Day of the Triffids has arrived. Floorboards, panelling and cornices are stripped out to try to find and eradicate every strand of rot. But it is this best course of action?

Douglas Blane, of the Spinnfields Trust, has restored and sold more than three dozen 18th-century houses in east London, many derelict and badly infected. He says: "I don't think dry rot is a great mystery. It's a plant. My policy is to kill it, using proprietary poisons, and then remove the affected timber where it causes structural weakness. We've never had a recurrence."

Kit Martin specialises in restoring and converting old country houses. "Every building I've worked on has had dry rot," he says. "My policy is to get rid of the initial cause. If you live in a house, and look after it properly, you do not get dry rot. Even a new house can develop dry rot if you don't clean the gutters."

Mr Martin consults Hutton & Rostrom, of Goshall, Surrey, a firm of building performance specialists which traces and manages decay in buildings. It uses "rot hounds", dogs it has trained to sniff out fungus. Geoffrey Hutton, the senior partner, has a five-point plan for tackling dry rot. "First, correct the cause," he says. "Then ventilate the affected area. Dry the walls, clean off the dry rot and make good."

Simply eliminating the conditions in which dry rot flourishes is, Mr Hutton says, as sound as intensive toxic chemical treatment, which can be hazardous for those who apply it and those who live in the building.

Dry rot, he says, came to Britain from the Himalayas, where the fungus grows naturally. "It was brought back by East Indian men in the 17th century. Broken masts were replaced by timbers floated down Indian rivers. In due course, they were brought ashore in England."

In Britain, dry rot does not grow in the natural environment, but it produces billions of spores which are in the air and are ready to take hold when the conditions are right. Damp, warm and dark buildings are ideal for growth. A building left empty, unventilated and boarded up is



Goldie, the labrador trained as a rot hound, goes into action with Tim Hutton of Hutton & Rostrom, who carries a borescope to check for fungus

especially vulnerable. The term dry rot is misleading because moist conditions are needed to initiate growth. Hence it is unknown in the United States, where extremes of dry heat and cold predominate.

Mr Hutton's worry is that the treatment of dry rot can cause as much damage to historic fabric as the disease. This is where his rot hounds come in: "It would take a surveyor a week to go around a very large house," he explains. "The dogs can do it in two or three hours. We calibrate the dogs by placing one or two infected pieces in the buildings for them to find. Then we know they're not suffering from a cold."

Another more expensive technique for detecting dry rot is the use of fiberoptic borescopes to explore cavities such as floor spaces.

The most common causes of damp

are blocked gutters and down pipes. "It's surprising how often tennis balls and plastic bags are found blocking gutter heads on even the highest roofs," Mr Hutton says.

With unoccupied buildings, pigeon carcasses, guano and nests are particular problems. Where damp is extreme, Hutton & Rostrom may use dehumidifiers and drying out tents, but care is needed to avoid drying walls faster than timbers, which could cause cracking. "Even in a very bad case," Mr Hutton says, "the problem can be dealt with during a normal building contract."

Ventilation is the key to ensuring dry rot does not return. "The problem is that people prevent a traditional building from operating as it was originally intended to," Mr Hutton

says. "The act of walking over floorboards had a diaphragm effect, pumping air over the joists, but wall-to-wall carpeting has put an end to this. Similarly, rooms were aired by regularly opening windows, as were the sash box mechanisms, which are particularly vulnerable to damp, but security locks have discouraged this."

New safeguards against damp are provided by electrical monitoring systems. For about £100, Mr Hutton will provide a system with eight sensors that can read moisture in valley gutters and beam ends. For about £1,500, his company offers a system with 140 sensors linked to an illuminated panel. The full works comes with a system called the Curator, which is installed in the Mansion House, Horse Guards in London and at York Crown Court. Curator, Mr Hutton says, "costs

£8,000 but that is little compared to remedial timber work that could cost £100,000". The system can be checked daily by computer and the building owner alerted to problems.

Mr Hutton is sceptical of the value of many dry-rot guarantees. "They usually cover the cost of replacing timber, but not associated plasterwork," Mr Blane has a neat solution to the recurring demand of mortgage companies for guarantees. "We do the dry-rot treatment ourselves - vigorously. Then we call for a survey. The surveyor finds little or no dry rot so the cost of treatment is minimal. But you still get the guarantee."

Hutton & Rostrom will present the results of its recent work at a conference, Green Treatment of Timber, at Taymouth Castle, Kenmore, Scotland, on February 19. Details: Karen Grikis 0224 316513.

What the papers said: Derwent May's bookbuyers' guide

Pleasure ratings are awarded to a maximum of five. Column centimetres indicate the length of reviews to date in national broadsheet newspapers.

5.5 Macey Katie: The 25-year-old American Katie Roiphe has written a book, *The Morning After* (Hamish Hamilton £7.99), arguing that women should not be so frightened of men, and that feminists have invented the "date-rape" crisis.

"Measuring rape," says Roiphe, "is not as straightforward as it seems."

William Leith, reviewing the book in *The Spectator*, was rather nervous of it: he wanted to like it but was not sure if he should. He asked two women about it. One agreed with Roiphe, believing that "all this complaining about men just makes women appear weaker and weaker," the other also agreed with Roiphe, but thought that the book was "very dangerous" because it could "give men the wrong idea".

In *The Daily Telegraph*, Lesley Garner welcomed the book, calling it "the best-written, clearest account yet of the blind, self-victimising alley into which American feminism has run". But Ruth Picardie in *The New Statesman* labelled Roiphe "the hot new anti-feminist" - "very readable", but "muddled", "naive" and "peddling clichés".

In *The Independent*, Anna Blomefield criticised the book. She found it an unhelpful nostalgia for the Seventies, "when sexuality was a matter for celebration". She thought that there was "a certain glibness in the author's pep talk", and that Roiphe "belittles what are quite plainly palpable fears that women have". Col cms: 103

3.5 Next house of cards?: Michael Dobbs strikes again - while the TV serial of his *To Play the King* is still tepid - with a novel, *The Touch of Innocents* (HarperCollins £9.99). But the first critics have been unstruck.

It is about a woman reporter, Izzy, whose baby mysteriously vanishes in a car crash. Victoria Glendinning in *The Daily Telegraph* called it "a good read", but she found the characterisation of Izzy "incoherent". In *The New Statesman*, Boyd Tonkin deplored "the flashy-trashy prose and cardboard figures". David Robson in *The Sunday Telegraph* said: "The plot is laughable, the characterisation is in the Mills & Boon league." Now - to play the Stoic? Col cms: 88

3.5 Good old Nero: Reflections of Nero, some essays edited by Jas Elsner and Jamie Masters (Duckworth £3), appalled the critics. These young scholars show Nero as a "cruelly misinterpreted, weak, boring" man. Peter Jones in *The Sunday Telegraph*, "A gallon pot of whitewash," agreed. Frederick Raphael in *The Sunday Times*, "Outrageous - it'll be John Major next!" Col cms: 107

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Novelist Michael Dobbs admits he has no imagination. But marketing strategy and research make up for it, reports Peter Guttridge

To play the thriller writer

Michael Dobbs, "Mrs Thatcher's baby-faced hit man" turned best-selling author, is, at 45, tall, freckled, slightly pudgy and smartly besuited. The former deputy chairman of Saatchi & Saatchi and creator of the ruthless Francis Urquhart, compared with whom Machiavelli looks like a *Blue Peter* presenter, has an unashamedly business-like approach to writing fiction.

He wrote his fifth novel, *The Touch of Innocents*, published this week, only after offering his publishers — and a film company which bought the pre-publication television rights — a choice of several alternative ideas.

"I'm not seeking to win the Booker Prize. I'm seeking to entertain," he explains. "And you can only entertain if people are involved. For this one I sat down with publishers and TV guys and said: 'Here are three or four ideas. I think they'll all make good books. I've got my own preferences but what do you think? You've got to sell them, you've got to make your TV programme.' We all came to the same conclusion: *The Touch of Innocents*."

Dobbs, the son of a Chestnut councillor (Tory, then independent), was educated at the local grammar and Christ Church, Oxford, and worked at Conservative central office from 1975 to 1987. He was too close for comfort to the Brighton bomb, dined the 1987 General Election campaign, but his inside knowledge of Westminster politics allowed him to write a prescient first novel, *House of Cards*, about a Tory leadership contest just before Mrs Thatcher was ousted.

The success of *House of Cards* and its sequel, *To Play the King* (which posited

a "King Charles" separated from his wife, almost two years before the Charles/Di split) depended on the feeling that here was a writer who was dishing genuine insider dirt. Dobbs modestly demurs about special knowledge or his skills as an augur.

"If you'd looked at the photographs of Charles and Diana and they had been any other couple you would have said they were in trouble," he says. "I don't think their split came as a surprise to anybody except the Buckingham Palace press office. As for political prescience — it's just that I've got a longer memory than many."

Although he now lives in Dorset with his wife Amanda and their two sons, he is still a familiar figure in the Palace of Westminster and in the Tory party. "I'm involved with the Tory party but on my own terms. If I feel they've made a real Horlicks of it I can say so. I describe myself as a cheerleader rather than a player — and I don't have to turn up for every game."

Dobbs is published in two dozen countries. He has just fired his US publisher, *The Touch of Innocents*, an efficient political thriller with a plot based on a rather unlikely coincidence: the single mother is an American television news reporter stationed in Europe.

"I'd prefer not to be published in the United States than to be published badly," Dobbs says. "But I'm looking for



Dobbs on research for his novel: "John and Norma were very helpful. Jim Callaghan ran me through what I wanted with surprising sharpness."

The novel, partly inspired by Dobbs's experience of fatherhood, is about a single mother's struggle with Devereux and assorted nasties to get her stolen baby back. To make it US-friendly, the single mother is an American television news reporter stationed in Europe.

"I'd prefer not to be published in the United States than to be published badly," Dobbs says. "But I'm looking for

freely and in parts beyond recognition," Dobbs says. "Andrew takes my dialogue and turns it into something like poetry. He takes my straightforward politics and murders them."

Urquhart has proved a mixed blessing for Dobbs. "He sits like a vulture on my shoulder. It's a struggle catching up with the TV adaptations. I killed Urquhart off in *House of Cards*. The BBC kept him alive so I had to resurrect him. They've made substantial changes in the second one. I'm working on the third and — from all our points of view — I hope the last one."

In addition to his Urquhart novels, he has written a spy novel and a Second World War adventure. Now he wants to concentrate on political thrillers, though ones which are not narrowly based in Westminster. "In marketing terms I should not have experimented with different kinds of book because people like to know what to expect. Marketing also dictates that he tries to write a book a year. 'My books can only justify themselves if they sell, and to sell I need continuity. I can't afford a four-year gap.'"

Dobbs freely admits he has "no imagination". He relies heavily on research: for *To Play the King* he got help from Prime Ministers past and present. "John and Norma were very helpful. Jim Callaghan ran me through what I wanted with surprising sharp-

ness. When I'd been a political hack trying to help Mrs T chop off his legs perhaps I believed our propaganda too much."

Dobbs expected to be ignored by politicians when *House of Cards* was published, but he is invited to Tory constituencies to speak and MPs often give him tithes to use. They read him too. Neil Kinnock sent him a "charming" letter after *House of Cards*; John Major says he reads them all.

And then there's the Royal Family. "It would be astonishing if nobody among them had read *To Play the King*," Dobbs says. "But I know it has been read — it was on one of the orders put in from Buckingham Palace to a local bookshop."

Dobbs's own reading used to be "Roy's Own kind of stuff" — Le Carré, Deighton, Forsyth. "But now my horizons have exploded. I read Joanna Trollope. I've started reading some poetry too."

Of course, there are limits. "I don't relish those books by people who feel they have something inside they want to share whether the world wants to share it or not," he says. "I think there's a difference between those and people like me who simply want to entertain."

So far as his own success as "an entertainer" goes, he has for some time been stuck with the tag "the second Jeffrey Archer". Unsurprisingly, perhaps, Dobbs sees it in marketing terms. "You find a lot of people will go into a bookstore only once a year — when Jeffrey Archer publishes his book." He shrugs. "At the end of the day, it is a business — you've got to get the punters in there."

● *The Touch of Innocents* is published by HarperCollins at £9.99

THEATRE: a tough-talking thriller from the Scottish coalfields

Mining a seam of four-letter words

Like Cullen, author of this entertaining thriller, himself worked for eight years in an Edinburgh colliery, so we can presumably regard his portrait of Scargill's children and their life underground as authentic. But what he has to tell us is likely to shock those still inclined to sentimentalise the camaraderie of the coalface. Seldom can the salt of the earth so thoroughly have lost its savour.

For one thing, the language leaves me unable to quote a single line of the play in a nice family newspaper like this. We all know that horny sons of toil do not always say "dash it" and "you rotter" when someone crosses them. Perhaps we should not be surprised if the exchanges of Scots miners make next week's programme about the English football manager, packed as it reportedly is with expletives undeluted, sound like a genteel episode from Lady Bracknell's autobiography. But the play becomes inadvertently hilarious when, just as the pit is about to be blown apart, precious seconds are squan-

The Cut Bush

dered on the mandatory quota of four-letter words.

Still, that is a small matter beside the real surprise. Some of these men make the property sharks of David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross* — a play I suspect that has influenced Cullen — look as snooty as goldfish. I have worked at an American university, and seen professors battling for tenure, and I can tell you that even there, even there nobody was as devious and destructive as a Cullen miner who wants to become deputy general manager of his pit.

Cullen's inspiration, if that's the word, is clearly one of the ugliest events of the 1984 miners' strike. Salter, at that time a fanatic union man, was sentenced to eight years after taking the rap for a crime committed by his friend Hessel, the dropping of a rock on a "scab" from a motorway bridge. Now he is out of prison and back at his old pit. There he seeks vengeance, not on Hessel, but on deputy manag-

er McGee, who he believes got his post by engineering an accident in which his principal rival, Salter's father, was killed.

Are you with me? The snarling Scots accents of Martin McCaig's cast notwithstanding, this is plain sailing compared with what follows. Hessel gradually reveals himself as a plotter beside whom Iago seems as innocuous as Desdemona. He invigiles himself into Salter's confidence and persuades him to wreck McGee's reputation by sabotaging the pit. At the same time he tries to cage a promotion from McGee by offering to dispose of the "mad" Salter. His lies multiply and spiral, but they have one end in view, which is to secure him the post of deputy general manager.

Cullen has no social agenda to plug, still less a political axe to grind; but it is clearly no accident that the pit is being privatised and in peril of closure. Whoever becomes deputy manager will probably end up deputy manager of nowhere. If Cullen has any points to make, they are about the vanity of human wishes and the intransigence of human will.

But this no morality play, rather a clever melodrama, one that bounces you into accepting its twists and buying its implausibilities by the verve of its writing, curse-words and all, and the energy of its cast. Frank Gallagher, Kenneth Glenaan, and all I unashamedly enjoyed it.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE



Mine is the vengeance: Jim Twaddale (left) as McGee and Frank Gallagher as Salter

Operatic stars warm New York

Fellow divas and surprise guests joined one of America's living musical legends in a birthday celebration at Carnegie Hall

New Yorkers came out on the city's coldest day in 60 years to celebrate Marilyn Horne's sixtieth birthday at Carnegie Hall. The event was a benefit recital in support of Horne's new foundation, named after herself, which is dedicated to advancing the cause of the song recital in America. The gala's four hours flew by — well, on wings of song. Five Americans — Horne, Frederica von Stade, Renée Fleming, Ruth Ann Swenson, and Helen Donath, substituting for an ailing Benita Valente — were joined by Montserrat Caballé, who flew over by Concorde for the event.

The first half of the programme, entitled "Divas in Song," was done as an ordinary recital, with each of the ladies performing a small set of songs. The second half was staged as a *soirée musicale*, with armchairs and side-tables ranged across the stage.

Von Stade was in particularly good form, bringing down the house with slyly amusing performances of Copland's "Why Do They Shut Me Out of Heaven?" and a cabaret-style song by William Bolcom called "Amor". Helen Donath, a singer beloved in New York, sang a charming version of "Oh What a Beautiful Morning" with words adapted to the occasion.

Ruth Ann Swenson led off the second half with a stunning, near-flawless rendition of "Voci di Primavera," which left the singer breathless and obviously elated at her own achievement. Renée Fleming,

hampered by a poor choice of material, made a worse impression than she ought to have done. A tear-jerker by Fred Karger, setting the text of a letter to his wife from a Civil War soldier about to die in battle, was inappropriate to the occasion, as her interpretation of Dumas Ellington's "In a Sentimental Mood" was stiff and over-stylized.

The *soirée* format was perfectly suited to Caballé, who chatted away in her usual zany fashion. Her renditions of songs by Granados and Turina proved that she is still our most tasteful and effective *cantante*.

It would not be terribly interesting to detail the changes in one of the great voices of the century, on the occasion of the singer's sixtieth birthday. Suffice it to say that Horne's final number, the spiritual "Shall We Gather At the River," was delivered with a majesty that was artistically the equal of the pure-voiced pyrotechnics of her younger colleagues on the stage.

A birthday gala would not be complete without surprise guests: the young Icelandic tenor Olafur Bjarnason, visibly nervous, made his Carnegie debut with Lehár and Verdi, and Samuel Ramey sang a bravura arrangement of "Of Man River" with electrifying power, accompanied by James Levine. Horne's regular accompanist, Martin Katz, and Warren Jones, performed heroically throughout the long afternoon.

JAMIE JAMES

Callas, still stirring it

THE EMI reissue, refurbished CD, of the *Lucia di Lammermoor* Callas sang with La Scala, met with just acclaim a couple of years ago. Its success has prompted the company to dig into the archives and come up with more Callas live on stage. The choice has fallen on three operas taped in the 1950s: in chronological order, Verdi's *Macbeth*, Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* and Bellini's *Il pirata*.

The best by a long chalk, in both performance and sound quality, is *Anna Bolena* (CMS 64941 2, 2 CDs). Donizetti's opera had been long forgotten until in 1956 Bergamo, his birthplace, decided to revive it. The conductor Gianandrea Gavazzeni immediately recognised it as an ideal Callas vehicle and persuaded La Scala to put it on the next season. Milan responded by giving it the full works: opulent production by Visconti, equally opulent sets and costumes (based on Holbein) by Benois and plenty of rehearsal time.

Callas responded, by all contemporary accounts, with her magisterial best. She was always supreme at playing affronted women and Anna is affronted from the outset. But it is the final scene in the Tower of London which is the test of the soprano: Anna has had enough of life and, via

with considerable élan against a Carnegie Hall audience eager to applaud every note. EMI has thoughtfully included a second version of the scene from an Amsterdam concert later that year when Callas was in freer voice and the audience better behaved.

In New York Callas was partnered, no more than respectfully, by the almost forgotten tenor Pier Miranda Ferraro, and the equally unremembered Constantino Ego. Nicola Rescigno was Callas's favoured conductor at the end of the 1950s and accompanied (admirably) on both occasions.

The 1952 Scala *Macbeth* (CMS 7 64944 2, 2 CDs) has long been available on the Cetra label with more snap, crackle and pop than a packet of Rice Krispies. EMI's engineers have succeeded in removing some of the noise, but the sound quality remains poor. In particular Victor de Sabata and the Scala orchestra are able only to make a distant contribution. Enzo Mascherini in the title role is a routine *Macbeth*; Gino Penno is a pleasing Macduff. But the set is strictly for Callas fanciers and they will recall that she gave better accounts of Lady *Macbeth*'s big scenes when she took them into her concert repertory.

JOHN HIGGINS

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Susan is a Goody Two-Shoes compared to Meredith Johnson, a woman who was once Tom's lover and has now been promoted over his head to a vice-presidency he had hoped was going to be his. On her very first day on the job, as it were, Meredith sends out for wine and a packet of condoms, invites Tom up to her office, and tries her damndest to give him a good seeing-to.

Penny Perick reviews Michael Crichton's novel *Disclosure* and John Sutherland profiles the brilliant career of the author of *Jurassic Park* and *Rising Sun* — tomorrow in the Books section of *The Sunday Times*

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I'm bereft, Sage has stopped making cows' eyes at me

FARMER'S DIARY: PAUL HEINEY

Distraught at the breakdown of what was once a loving relationship, I am on the point of bursting into tears. It is all so heartbreaking. I know she used to love me: we gazed into each other's eyes, shared secrets, took walks together. Why, she even licked my boots. But now she will have nothing to do with me: she shuns me at every turn and voices her displeasure loudly, in the middle of the night, to disturb my sleep, which is already fitful through my distress at the way we have drifted apart. Oh, Sage! Be mine again, I pray.

But there is no persuading her that I am still her friend even though I have tried to talk her out of this silly mood. It all started a month ago when I noticed on the calendar that she was due to calve in January. So I separated her from the rest of the herd and put her in the most comfortable byre a

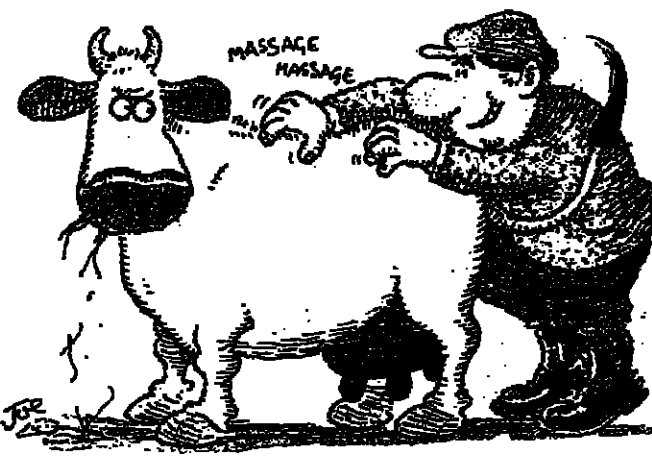
cow could wish for. It has white-washed walls, a cobbled floor, a curved iron hay rack on the wall in the corner, and a door to keep out the cold draughts, but a slatted window which admits plenty of fresh air. I have stayed in worse hotels. Sage, our British White cow, with the appealing black nose, ears, teats and snow-white body, was quite happy to take up residence here; it was the room service that was the problem.

Cows must not be too fat when they calve or it can lead to trouble. I was warned. I looked at Sage and although it might not be considered good manners to comment on a lady's weight, I gave her rump a hearty slap and said: "We'd best

ave some o' that belly off you, girl." I cancelled the oats, banned the juicy mangels and gave her only hay.

A neighbour insisted that he fed his cows only straw before calving, but he does not know this cow. Sage is the feed merchant's best friend: she is ruthless in pursuit of food at the trough, butting and nudging all who dare to get in her way; she would even allow her own calf to starve if it was a toss-up between that and missing a square meal.

She has not taken this diet lying down. Indeed, she is never off her feet, head over the stable door, bellowing towards the bedroom. When I stagger in with a slice or two of hay, she will butt and



swagger like the rudest of customers sending back a bottle of wine. And she looks she gives me! My heart is broken.

But it is possible that science may come to my help because I

have read this week that researchers have established that by touching horses in precise places, usually at the base of neck, a flow of chemical is produced that pacifies the animal. Perhaps it will

work with cows. Admittedly, it will need as much chemical as is stored on Canvey Island to get Sage and me back together again, but at least there is some hope.

There is nothing new in this latest research, as old horsemen will testify. Grabbing horses by the mane is an old Gypsy trick still used by some vets. I am well familiar with the twitch, which is a loop of cord on the end of a pole; the loop is quickly slipped over the horse's upper lip and tightened. As the loop is twisted ever tighter so the horse becomes more and more tranquillised until it is almost in a trance.

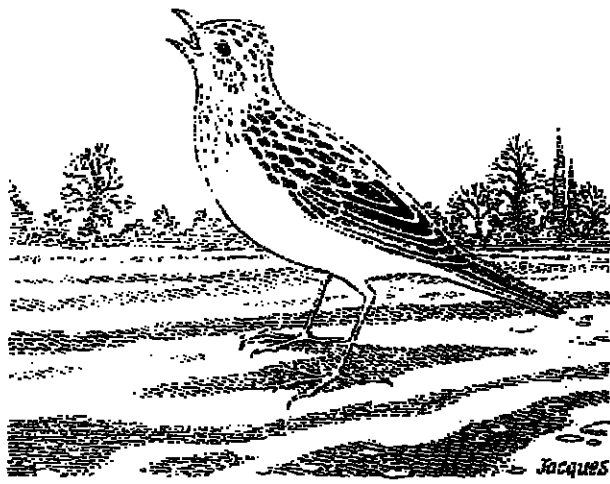
I met a scientist a few years ago who had conducted research into the way the twitch affects the horse: I had assumed it to be rather cruel, like picking up an obnoxious boy by the ear, but apparently not. It does not frighten the horse into submission, it

merely subdues it, again through the release of chemicals.

A slender booklet of 1885 entitled *The Taming of Horses* (Routledge, price 6d) confirms this. On the subject of breaking a young horse, J.S. Rarey advises: "... catch hold of the halter close to the jaw with your left hand, while the right is resting on the top of the neck, holding on to the mane". There seems to be nothing new in touching horses in the right place.

But where do I touch Sage in order to build the bridge between us that was once so firm and now lies in rubble? *The Taming of Horses* is a book that has never been written. Someone must have the answer and somehow I must get the message across to her that there is a hand of friendship stretching out towards her. It is simply that the hand does not know where to grab.

Feather report



The skylark will sometimes sing for five minutes at a time

Life looks up for larks

Skylarks are singing again over the fields. The song trickles down from the sky, unbroken, constantly changing — though as you listen, you notice recurrent phrases, the high soprano notes often followed by a little burst of deep contralto. They will sing for three minutes at a time, sometimes five. They hover in one spot, or move slowly forward into the wind. When they come down, they sweep round in a wide circle, then suddenly plummet. After landing, they stand out like pale stones among the first green shoots of winter corn.

What are they doing up there? Actually, they are not interested in the sky — what concerns them is the ground beneath. Up in the air they are marking out invisible boundaries to the earthly plot where in summer they will nest and get much of their food. Down below, if another skylark tries to enter that plot, the owner will warn it off, the crest on his head lifted in defiance. They will even fight briefly.

All this activity is in anticipation of the birds' needs in the longer, warmer days. For the present, the song is heard mainly in the mornings. Later in the day, the skylarks will flock up again to look for food. They appear quite different when they fly near the ground from when they are hovering overhead. They have a rather hesitant, fluttering wingbeat — and when a flock rises together, the birds waver in all directions, as if some wind from the centre of the flock was blowing them all about.

Some of these flocking birds will never sing here. They are winter immigrants from the Continent, who will be moving back home from March onwards and will take up their

territories in Germany or further north. But all the skylarks have the same distinctive flight call, a rippling "chirrup" that has been one of the typical sounds of our farmland since the forests were first cut down.

The skylark may be the bird of 1994. It has certainly not been the bird of the past ten years. Many new farming practices have conspired against it. The tendency to plant corn in autumn rather than spring means that the winter stubble-fields where skylarks traditionally fed have largely disappeared. It also means that the barley seed that they would turn to in February is gone. Luckily, they also feed on clover and the leaves of kale and beet.

However, their breeding has also been affected. In many fields the corn is now too high in spring to provide a suitable nesting place for them.

"Set-aside" promised to help them with both food and nesting-sites, but for several years farmers have been obliged to cut down the weeds on any set-aside land early in the summer, with much resultant destruction of nests.

That is no longer necessary, and the magazine *British Birds* has just made an appeal to farmers to give skylarks a better chance this year. They could soon be singing all over the heavens again.

DERWENT MAY

Twickers — red-breasted goose on the river Roach in Essex; two pie-billed grebes, one in Northumberland, one in Cornwall; American wigeon, Aberdeen, Scotland. Birders — listen for the first chaffinches singing. Details from Birdline, 0891 70222. Calls cost 30p a minute cheap rate, 45p at all other times.

A world forged from iron

In our microchip age, Britain's blacksmiths strike a blow for craftsmanship and individuality

The Turnpike Forge is soot-blackened and crumbling. It is noisy, draughty and dirty. The walls, beams and every spare surface are festooned with lethal looking lengths of metal. Machines clank, wheeze and thump among red hot sparks.

Eighty years after Henry Ford built the first production line, this place is an insult to the march of civilisation — to man's efforts to turn himself into a robot. In the world of the microchip and the chicken nugget there should be a law against Roy Hanson.

He trained as a blacksmith in the Army, mending the armour-plating on tanks before transferring to the commandos. Even without the tattoos on his remarkable biceps, he still, in his early fifties, has the look of a marine — close cropped, solid and imperturbable. After leaving the Army, he spent 16 years maintaining heavy machinery on production lines. Ten years ago, the blacksmith who ran the Turnpike Forge at Clifton Hampden, near Abingdon, in Oxfordshire, died at his anvil at the age of 92 and Mr Hanson took over the business.

In the far corner of the forge is the fire — in a cradle of ancient, crumbling brickwork. The old bellows are still in position behind it, but the fire is now blown by a ratchet electric motor. Beside the fire, raised on a slice of tree-trunk is the anvil, and by the door is a huge 1922 electric power-hammer for stamping heated metal into moulds.

The power-hammer, like all the machines, has been salvaged from junk and restored at the forge. Mr Hanson is a practical man. He does not need a manual to make a machine work. His Ford pickup truck, as perfect as a motorshow model, is in fact a £20 wreck from a breakers yard rebuilt using tools and techniques that owe more to Hephaestus than the bad tempered, club-footed blacksmith son of Zeus and Hera, than the Dagenham production line.

There is a peculiar fascination in watching a shape

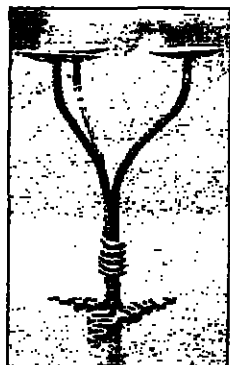
emerge from a block of iron. The metal can be worked hot or cold. Mr Hanson showed me how to twist a cold rod to produce the helter-skelter shape of fancy railings and poker handles. He hammered brackets from heated bars on the anvil and gave them lions' feet using the moulder beneath the power-hammer.

The skill is in judgment and precision. If the iron stays too long in the fire, it starts to crumble. If it is not hot enough, it snaps.

The one concession Mr Hanson makes to safety is a pair of plastic goggles. They look incongruous in the medieval forge, like a bikini on the Venus de Milo.

The range of work from the forge is extraordinary. It makes everything from industry-standard parts, such as spare parts for seatbelts, to huge wrought iron structures such as the 4ft x 10ft country house gates laid out in the back room. "The only thing we no longer do is shoe horses," Mr Hanson says. "That's a farrier's job."

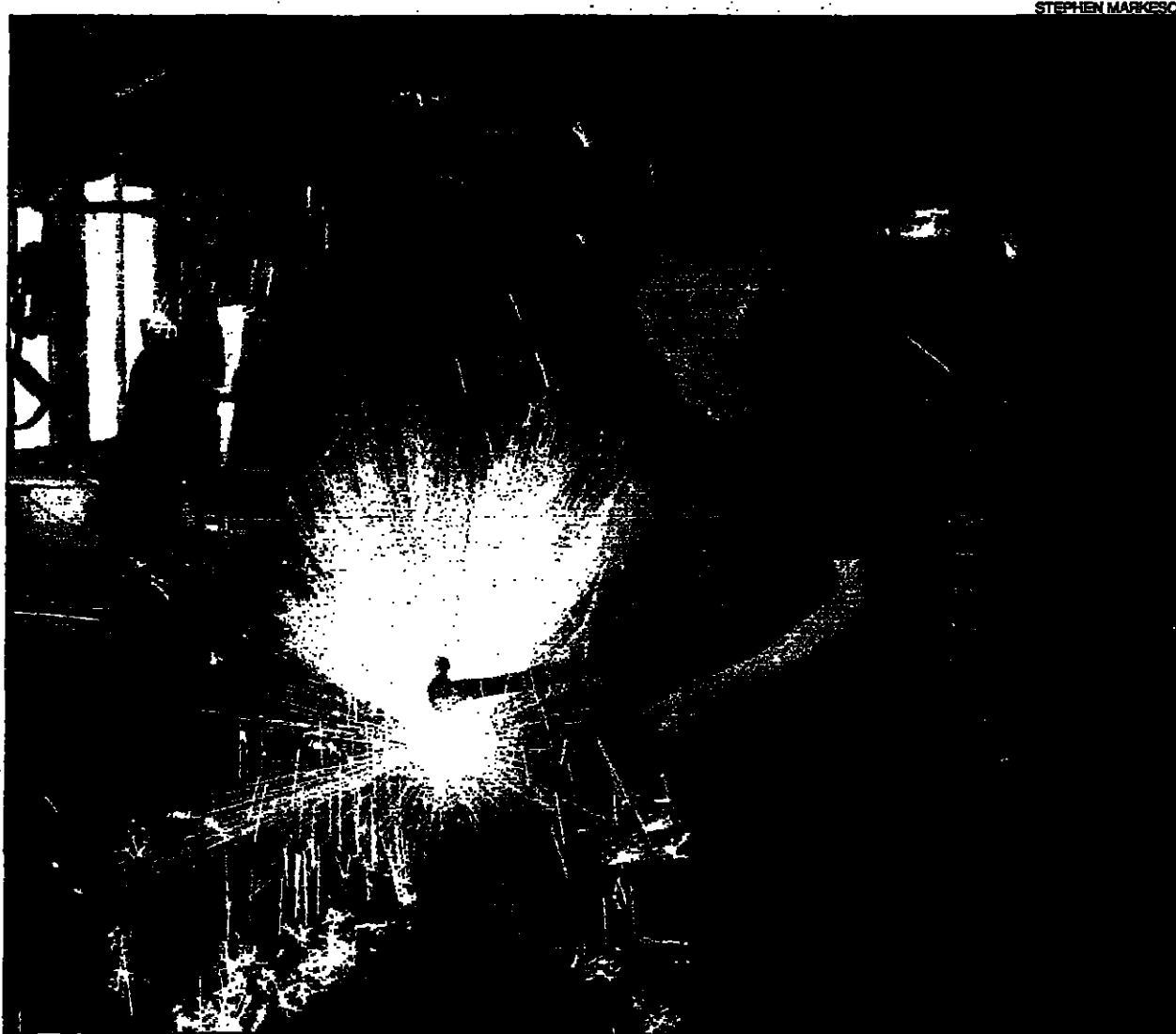
On Mr Hanson's traditional work, there is not a single welded joint — everything is fixed with pin and socket. On a smaller scale, the forge makes railings, sundials, weather vanes, and door knockers — anything that can be twisted out of iron. Mr Hanson has recently delivered a working prototype bicycle — a back-



An iron candlestick



A selection of pokers made at Turnpike Forge



Sparks fly as Roy Hanson fashions a piece of metal at his anvil using skills passed down through the centuries

wheel steering, front-wheel driven velocipede — for an interior decorator.

Mr Hanson's work is not expensive considering the labour involved. A set of fire irons costs £130, a weather vane £75 and a boot scraper £36. Mass-produced equivalents may be cheaper but, Mr Hanson says,

his work is made to last. Where blacksmiths can really save money for their customers is in their ability to repair machinery and tools that would otherwise need replacing, such as the blades on rotary lawnmowers.

Mr Hanson's sons have no interest in continuing the business. One is an accountant and the other wants to drive trucks. Mr Hanson's skills will not die with him, though. He has passed on his knowledge to his assistant, Matthew Haines, 23.

Although the craft of the blacksmith had been in decline, there are signs of a revival. Brian Russell, secretary of the British Artists' Blacksmiths Association, says: "People are looking for the genuine hand-made article." According to Ray Jorden, clerk to the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths, there is tremendous demand for quality. "If a blacksmith is good, he will always get business," he says.

To introduce a new generation to his craft, Mr Hanson plans to open Turnpike Forge as a working museum. I hope

he knows what he is doing. Children brought up on microwave ovens and central heating are likely to run screaming from this vision of hell. Worse still — they might like it too much. And where would Henry Ford's dream be then?

JAMES HEPBURN

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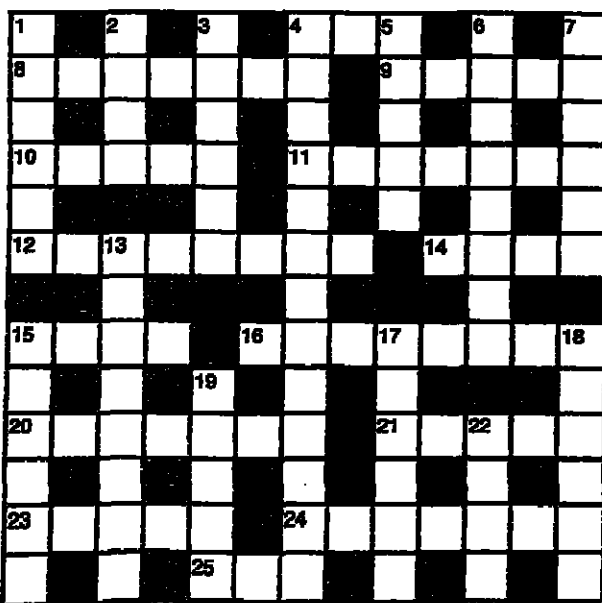
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TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 69

- | | |
|--|---|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 4 Provider of honey (3) | 1 Spice tree, source of mace (6) |
| 8 Submit to, experience (7) | 2 Tense, irritable (4) |
| 9 Well done! (5) | 3 Lawfully detain (6) |
| 10 Perhaps (5) | 4 That's final (4,4,5) |
| 11 Frank (7) | 5 Dark hardwood (5) |
| 12 Common sense, initiative (8) | 6 First white settlement in S Africa (4,4) |
| 14 Look sullen (4) | 7 Above board (6) |
| 15 Bird of peace (4) | 13 Person of unorthodox views (8) |
| 16 New; genuine; oldest form (5) | 15 Leave suddenly (6) |
| 20 Full-size art sketch (7) | 17 Slum area, usually of minority group (6) |
| 21 Scottish town; marble collector (5) | 18 Horizontal support over door (6) |
| 23 Birthplace of Mohammed (5) | 19 Pink, reef-forming marine animal (5) |
| 24 Ornamental open framework (7) | 22 Style of locomotion (4) |
| 25 Sheltered side (3) | |

SOLUTION TO NO 68

ACROSS: 1 Census 5 Aplomb 8 Old 9 Isabella 10 Upstream 12 Opal 13 Nettle 15 Senora 17 Troy 19 Sicilian 21 Euphoria 23 Chic 24 Raopon 25 Silage
DOWN: 2 Eclipse 3 Sadat 4 Spineless 5 Aga 6 Lie down 7 Melba 11 Musicians 14 Toyshop 16 Roaring 18 Route 20 Local 22 Run

WINNING MOVE

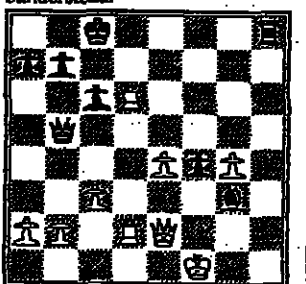
By Raymond Keene

Today's position is a variation from the game Krasenkov - Gurevich, Hastings Premier 1993. How can Black make a decisive material gain?

Send your answers on a postcard with your name and address to: The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The first three correct answers drawn on Thursday will win a British Chess Magazine book. The answer will be published next Saturday.

Solution to last Saturday's competition: 1 Qh5.

Last week's winners are: D Hughes, Birmingham; R Adams, Chesterfield; I James, Sanderstead.



WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

XIPHIAS
a. A swordfish
b. A class of gladiator
c. With pointed leaves

VENTIDUCT
a. With protruding belly
b. Leader of a Roman Twenty
c. An air passage

DIDO
a. An old story
b. A spotted roadstool
c. A cobbler's awl
ELOGIUM
a. Praise
b. Off-the-record speech
c. An inscription

Answers on page 13